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ABSTRACT

Five reports present findings of research into professional development (PD) issues in vocational education and training (VET) in Australia. "Lessons Learnt: An Analysis of Findings of Recent Evaluation Reports on PD in VET" (Kate Perkins) provides an overview of issues, insights, and ideas emerging from past PD experience that may be relevant to planning and implementation of future PD programs to support New Apprenticeships and other national initiatives. "Perceptions of VET Staff towards Recent National Training Reforms" (Michele Simons, Roger Harris) provides a brief summary of literature and current research in relation to VET teachers, trainers, and managers and their perceptions toward training reforms and explores PD implications. "Summary of PD Issues Emerging from Recent Reviews and Reports" (Roger Mathers et al.) is based on three related reviews of over 65 evaluations, reports, and papers and provides a summary of issues concerning delivery of recent PD programs and perceptions of VET staff toward training reforms. "Trends in Employment, Skill, and Qualification Requirements of Training Staff" (Roger Mathers) identifies trends occurring across VET sectors and explores PD issues that emerged. "Strategic Use of Professional Development to Implement VET Objectives, Volume 1: Final Report and Volume 2: Case Studies" (Roger Harris, Michele Simons) deals with change processes in the implementation of VET objectives and PD's role in supporting those processes (volume 1) and contains summaries of 10 case studies (volume 2). (YLB)

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Further information:
Australian National Training Authority
GPO Box 3120
Brisbane, Qld 4001
Telephone: (07) 3246 2300
Facsimile: (07) 3246 2490
ANTA Web site: www.anta.gov.au

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Preface

Late in 1996, the Australian National Training Authority contracted the National Centre for Vocational Education Research and the Centre for Research in Education, Equity and Work at the University of South Australia to undertake research into professional development issues in the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

The outcomes of this research have been a series of five succinct reports aimed at providing guidance to future professional development initiatives and programs in support of the National Training Framework. These reports were completed between January and July 1997, and involved extensive review and analysis of many evaluations, reports and papers, and many telephone and face-to-face interviews with key informants in system-wide department, training providers and case study sites in all States and Territories, across all the sectors of VET.

The five reports are:

- Lessons learnt: an analysis of findings of recent evaluation reports on professional development in vocational education and training
- Perceptions of vocational education and training staff towards recent national training reforms
- Trends in employment, skill and qualification requirements of training staff
- The strategic use of professional development to implement vocational education and training objectives
- Summary of professional development issues emerging from recent interviews and reports

The research team included: Roger Mathers (project leader), Michele Simons, Roger Harris, Hugh Guthrie and Kate Perkins. Other interviewers interstate are acknowledged in the respective reports.

A project reference committee provided overall direction and focus for the project. Its members included: Simon Wallace (ANTA), Joan Armitage (DEETYA), John Blakely (TAFE Queensland), Juris Varpins (WA Department of Training), John Mitchell (DETAFE SA), Chris Matthews (VET Division, DETAFE SA) and Richard Kenyon (as project manager, NCVER). Ian Gribble (OTFE) provided valuable advice to the project leader on each of the projects.

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Lessons learnt: An analysis of findings of recent evaluation reports on professional development in vocational education and training

KATE PERKINS

Introduction

Although the shape of things to come is not entirely clear, it appears that the National Training Framework (NTF) is based on the essential concepts that have driven the training reform agenda. The NTF is perceived as a 'blizzard of initiatives' (Terry Moran, quoted in Varpins) intended to focus the system on client needs, flexibility in achieving outcomes and a significant reduction in reliance on prefabricated course materials. It could offer an 'enormous professional challenge' for all in the VET sector, even those who are now relatively comfortable with the changes of the past 5 years (Varpins 1996).

Despite the effort put into professional development (PD) over the last 5 years, there are still major concerns regarding the current levels of skill, knowledge and understanding of those who must turn the NTF vision into reality. Thus, PD must be seen as an essential element in the overall strategy of change, but should not be a repeat of the past. However, the experience of the last 5 years offers guidance for future directions.

This report is based on the assumption that in planning for the future, there are lessons to be learnt from past PD programs, particularly those that were part of the training reform agenda. It is intended as a working paper to inform discussion regarding future planning and provision of PD related to national vocational education and training (VET) priorities.

Aim

The aim of this report is to evaluate past experience in order to identify issues that should be taken into account in future PD initiatives, including effective and ineffective approaches to planning, selection, staffing, methodology and evaluation.

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Scope

This paper provides an overview of the findings of PD programs in the VET sector. It has a particular, though not exclusive, focus on PD programs of the last 3 years connected to the national training reform agenda (e.g , the Australian Vocational Training System PD program, the National Transition Program and CBT in Action).

Structure

Introduction

The intention, scope and structure of 'lessons learnt' is outlined.

The context

A brief overview is provided of significant trends in the VET sector. It looks particularly at those that have provided a frame of reference for the reading of evaluations of past programs, and information regarding reports that form the basis of the review.

Key findings

An overview is given of issues, insights and ideas emerging from past PD experience that may have relevance to planning and implementation of future staff development programs to support *New Apprenticeships* and other national initiatives.

Detailed review of past PD programs

The main strengths and weaknesses of past programs at systemic and project levels are identified and discussed.

Lessons learnt

Suggestions are made for future PD management and methodology.

The context

The National Training Framework

The NTF continues the training reform agenda's challenge to the traditional role of the trainer as an expert who offers prescriptive courses at the provider's convenience. Under NTF, there will be an increased emphasis on competency-based outcomes, a push to increase flexibility in terms of how these are achieved and a significant reduction in reliance on prefabricated course materials. There will still be a role for

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clearly defined skills-based technical courses and off-site training. However, an increasing emphasis will be placed on training as a means to an end, a strategic component of wider enterprise initiatives. Under NTF, training at an organisational level can no longer be treated as 'skills deficiency treatment' (Varpins 1996).

At an enterprise level, there has been an increasing focus on training as strategy. The significant changes foreshadowed by Federal initiatives, such as the user-choice model, suggest that enterprise needs and expectations of training providers may well shift. For example, organisations may require:

- information services regarding VET requirements, standards, accreditation, RPL, funding;
- assistance to customise generic standards, courses, or produce training approaches as part of new-style training packages with no set curriculum; and
- support to plan and implement workplace training and conduct assessment.

In order to meet these needs, VET providers/practitioners may be expected to adopt a consultant's role, not so much as diagnosticians offering appropriate medicine, but as facilitators collaborating with industry members to achieve enterprise goals.

> Staff will undertake a broader range of functions which will require a broader range of skills ... They will be required to have a high level of professional skills to successfully expand their role as learning managers/facilitators and will develop and utilise more innovative techniques as modern educators and trainers.
>
> (Hall *et al*. 1991, cited in VEETAC 1992)

Trainers will need to be up-to-date in relevant technical areas and confident to leave the structured classroom environment for the workplace to facilitate the integration of on- and off-the-job training. They will become learning facilitators, working in partnership with individuals, enterprises and industry groups to negotiate learning projects, develop new courses, customise generic courses to suit individual and enterprise needs, and establish and maintain the mechanisms for assessment. Even where consultancy and learning facilitation are not required, classroom-based trainers will need to have made the shift to an outcomes orientation and become industry-oriented.

The current situation

The new training roles involve a range of skills, competencies and background knowledge that may well be far beyond the present technical, classroom-delivery skills and confidence of many practitioners. Reports focussing on TAFE PD needs have identified major gaps in skills and understanding.

> When current skills were compared with skills deemed necessary for the future, the largest gaps occurred in client need/liaison, updating own subject and curriculum development.
>
> (Hall *et al*. 1991, cited in VEETAC Working Party on Staffing Issues 1992)

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> A reality facing TAFE is that there are large numbers of existing staff who were recruited in the 1970s and early 1980s who have not undertaken any significant industrial experience, and who have apparently lost touch with the industrial workplace ... Over the next 2 or 3 years, these staff will be working within the requirements of workplace competency standards ... It is likely that the gap between their industry knowledge and skills will become more obvious. The consultants are of the opinion that it is possible in many instances this gap is more likely to be a chasm.
>
> (National Staff Development Committee 1993).

Mathers' recent evaluation of eight training programs aimed at integrating formal training and work-based skills development provides more evidence of issues to be addressed (Mathers 1996). The study suggests that:

- non-industry-based providers lack appreciation of industry and enterprise needs;
- private enterprises have little understanding of VET requirements and tend to be cynical. Many have little awareness of the benefits of ongoing training. Some industries are only just beginning to develop competency standards;
- there is poor communication between on- and off-the-job practitioners and supervisors;
- TAFE personnel are reluctant to relinquish their hold on tasks and assessment; and
- time and operational priorities are a major issue.

PD programs

A number of programs have been developed in the past 3–4 years. These programs have attempted to close the gap between what PD is currently available and what is required in the future to operate successfully in the environment envisaged by the training reform agenda. Due to the size of the potential market, those who have participated form only a small percentage compared with the percentage who have not.

To date, most programs have operated on the premise that PD is primarily for trainers, with the majority of programs designed for TAFE practitioners and possibly involving industry-based trainers.

Review of PD programs

The review of past experience that forms the basis of this paper was not designed to be exhaustive; rather, it has involved the close reading of a representative selection of strategic frameworks, evaluation reports and commentaries related to the major Australian VET sector PD programs from 1992 to 1996. In addition, some reviews of relevant overseas experience are provided.

Little information is available about involvement by members of other sectors in VET (e.g. Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITAB), community groups, secondary

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teachers and private providers).[a] The general lessons learnt from past experience, as outlined in the following sections, should have some relevance to all providers. However, more information may be needed about the specific background and needs of some groups before new programs are designed.

Major programs reviewed

- CBT in Action
- AVTS—Federal, plus State reports from Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and New South Wales
- National Transition Program (NTP)
- Return to Industry (RTI)
- National Staff Development Committee programs—the gender agenda, open learning, flexible delivery, adult literacy and basic education personnel
- Workplace Training Program
- National Professional Development Program (NPDP)
- The provision of training in the delivery and assessment of competency-based training (DEET)

Program management levels

Most programs reviewed operated at a number of management levels:

- **Federal**

  includes conceptualisation and overall strategy, funding to States and Territories, coordination and evaluation in relation to the goals of the training reform agenda.

- **State**

  includes State program strategy development, funding allocation (usually to individual projects, but could include centrally organised activities such as awareness-raising sessions or project leader training meetings), program coordination, possibly central training delivery functions, State-level evaluation.

- **Project**

  includes individual projects organised by interested parties (e.g. ITAB, TAFE college, enterprise) with own goals (aligned with those of the program), strategy development, implementation and evaluation mechanisms.

[a] With the opening up of the training market, further research may be warranted.

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- **Systems**

  the term 'systems level' is used in regard to issues concerning decision-making at Federal and/or State level.

Key findings

The following observations are based on an analysis of strategic frameworks, program evaluations, case studies and commentaries. The key issues were apparent at all management levels—Federal, State and individual project. The key findings outlined here are explored in more detail in the review of past PD programs.

Issues at systems level

PD as a strategy for change

PD is not yet sufficiently appreciated, or planned and implemented, as a strategic activity. National- and State-level PD programs are more often funded and structured to emphasise the distinctions between them, rather than to exploit synergies. A picture emerged of a fragmented system with programs operating largely independently of each other, thus making PD a high-cost, low-result strategy for change within the training reform agenda. There was an impression that most programs were operating on an *ad hoc*, gut-feeling level. Only AVTS appears to have deliberately adopted a strategic approach to planning. Although results were mixed, the experience offers useful lessons for future directions.

In the few instances where a strategic approach was adopted at State level, several programs were integrated to present a focussed image to potential industry clients. This achieved resource efficiencies and knowledge-sharing for program personnel, and made it much easier to attract and satisfy industry participants.

The lack of strategic appreciation of PD may have contributed to the widespread treatment of PD programs as peripheral to core activity by many TAFE institutes and private enterprises. To date, much PD has been perceived as competing with the real work. Lack of overt support from supervisors/upper management and structural and logistical issues undermined individual experience of PD. They also reduced the possibility of organisational impact, despite assumptions about the possibility of *cascading*. This has been particularly evident in TAFE's Return to Industry (RTI) program. Only programs utilising action-learning, where efforts were made to establish management support and effective mechanisms for sharing learning, appear to have had a positive impact across organisations.

In most programs, PD has been treated as an individual concern. The fact that so few TAFE institutes have offered PD or provided remuneration to part-time staff for

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attendance raises questions about what (and who) is valued. It also highlights the issue of whether PD is seen as the responsibility of the individual, the organisation or a combination of both.

Intra-program roles and relationships

A number of programs reported dissatisfaction with the relationship between the Federal coordinating body and the State program. There was a strong them/us perception, with complaints about lack of appreciation of logistical issues. Complaints included impossible deadlines, slow release of funding, poor communication and lack of coordination of production of materials.

The problems identified by the evaluations suggest a need for Federal and State programs to meet regularly to align their efforts and plan strategies to support ongoing communication and mutual support. They also need to explore further their expectations of each other and design the most appropriate roles to achieve the required ends.

Within a State program, there was often little support available for individual projects. However, results were dramatically increased when a program was able to provide ongoing support through expert facilitators, and bring together coordinators and participants from different projects. Again, this occurred most often as part of an action-learning methodology.

Who was targeted? Who should be targeted?

Selecting participants for programs is, potentially, a strategic decision, but in many instances it does not appear to have been treated as such. Evaluations usually described the selection process used. However, if there was a perceived relationship between broader objectives and specific criteria for selection, it was not considered important enough to explain. A closer look at selection processes and the range of people who have actually participated could yield useful information.

Almost all PD has been aimed at frontline practitioners, mostly from TAFE, although participation of industry-based trainers appears to be increasing.

The evaluations clearly show that PD programs were more likely to succeed when recorded as a strategic activity, involving highly skilled managers and facilitators, and operating in workplaces with a committed senior management. There was a perception that those responsible for managing a program or project often focussed on administration of funding. In addition, although non-practitioners are critical to the success of PD programs, there has been little focus on PD for this group. A new perception of 'professional development' may be required so that programs can provide

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appropriate support and skills development for program and project managers, facilitators, industry enterprise and TAFE institute management.

Only a few programs and projects actively pursued members of the 'hard' and 'too hard' baskets. Most programs have operated with volunteers, usually involving individuals who saw a need to improve their skills, or enterprises already some way down the track as far as training was concerned. Thus, the lessons from most of the reports reviewed must be treated with caution. Programs that were successful with willing volunteers may not offer useful models for attracting future target groups. However, one lesson can be learnt for the future. Each program and project is unique. The more client-driven and flexible the approach, and the more skilled the personnel, the more likely the chance of success. Some approaches are based on the concept of targeting a specific group, offering PD that members of the target group will be able to recognise as beneficial, and incorporating processes that allow for local conditions. These approaches appear to offer the greatest chance of success for a wide range of different client groups, including those in the 'too hard' basket.

Effective leadership

The quality of program leadership emerged as a key factor in overall success. However, to be effective, program managers needed to move from the traditional focus on administration to having an active role as strategic planners, coordinators, negotiators and consultants. Successful program managers had a breadth and depth of knowledge and a wide range of skills and thus benefited from PD in specific areas such as strategic planning.

A key factor in industry-based project success was the part played by project managers in winning top management support and providing a service to the enterprise, rather than training or PD per se. Many projects (and programs) only recognised this after the event. In both TAFE and industry settings, some project managers focussed their attention on establishing and maintaining the PD activities without managing the process through enterprise decision-makers. These managers reported that participants received little enterprise support and became disheartened. This was particularly evident on programs run over a period of time, such as TAFE's Return to Industry scheme.

Logistics

The evaluations identified logistical factors that made it harder for PD programs to function effectively, but tended not to cite those that worked well. Problems included the timing of programs, which impacted on their effectiveness. Some programs were run at totally inappropriate times for target groups, usually in an attempt to meet unrealistic funding deadlines. There were many complaints about delays in receiving

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funding, inadequate levels of funding and requirements for funding use that limited the ability of the program to reach designated target groups.

Reporting and evaluation

Evaluation is an issue at all levels of the PD process—the system, program, project and individual participant. External evaluators commented on the limitations of post-program studies, lack of evaluation guidelines and lapse of time between program completion and evaluation. Evaluation criteria were not necessarily closely tied to specific outcomes; nor were rigorous processes built in from the earliest stages. These were required not only to ensure accountability, but also to facilitate the learning process. Many programs and projects were not designed with ongoing monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of the process. They used inadequate post-project evaluation methods but claimed to yield the required results ('Outcomes achieved ... Outcomes achieved ... Outcomes achieved ... the projects reported'). However, these reports provide little indication of what really happened or how outcomes were deemed to have been reached.

There has been more emphasis on summative evaluation and proof of success to justify funding, than on formative evaluation and learning from mistakes. In moving into largely unchartered waters, is it reasonable to expect that every project will be 'successful'? The mechanisms for the system, other programs and even projects within a single program to learn from each other's less-than-perfect efforts are currently less than perfect themselves.

System requirements of reporting and evaluation need to be tied to a more strategic approach. Some program participants called for formal standardised guidelines to assist the evaluation process, but the real need may be for training program and project managers in evaluation concepts and techniques.

Issues at project level

A strategic approach at project level

Each PD project is a microcosm of the broader program and could benefit from a stronger perception of itself as a change program, with all that that entails. Project teams have to see a project within its context, taking into account factors external to PD activities. For example, the project manager must recognise the need to meet enterprise needs and win top management support. Projects were more successful when it was recognised that a PD program was not only intended for the benefit of individual participants, but provided some strategic benefit to the enterprise (TAFE or industry). Thus, it became a priority for the organisation as well as for the individual participant.

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PD as a model of NTF concepts and methodologies

There is real potential to use PD programs to model best practice in terms of work-based, self-paced and action-learning and to design approaches that take into account what we know about the needs of learners. Only a few programs have risen to the challenge. However, if success is measured in terms of long-term change in attitudes and behaviour, those that utilised concepts and methodologies supported by the NTF were more likely to be successful (provided they had the requisite expertise), than those who opted for more traditional approaches.

Facilitator role and expertise

Evaluations revealed instances of high-quality facilitation, particularly when action-learning methodologies were used. However, evaluations showed many other examples where participants reported that facilitators were not well organised, experienced, or responsive. Facilitators must be experts, with a breadth and depth of knowledge and experience covering educational processes, technical areas, specific industry needs and change management issues. They must be able to model the practices they are espousing, or people become cynical, and they must be flexible and client-oriented or whole programs fail.

Facilitators operating within work-based projects needed to be able to act as consultants and negotiators, assisting enterprises to identify their goals and designing PD training to support their achievement.

Some programs noted difficulty in finding appropriate personnel, but few appear to have specifically allocated funds for PD to support the development of appropriate staff. Initial training of PD facilitators is a systemic issue that cannot be adequately addressed at program level, but program support for PD trainers appears to yield results.

Selection of methodology

Face-to-face approaches were by far the most prevalent employed in past programs, with only limited development of other forms of delivery. Feedback suggests that given the conceptual shifts involved and the potential sensitivity of some aspects of the NTF, personal contact with expert facilitators/mentors and opportunities to discuss with peers are essential ingredients of a successful package. However, there is certainly room for other methods.

Face-to-face PD took several forms. People who went to traditional-style seminars and structured workshops—where they were told that new approaches would be a good idea—were often not convinced. Interestingly, even when feedback was positive, the seminars may have allayed some fears, but were not adequate in assisting participants to develop skills. Some attendees reported they were not sure where to begin, and one

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evaluation questioned the level of understanding of basic concepts displayed by a set of enthusiastic seminar participants. Most evaluations did not conduct a pre- or post-seminar test of understanding.

There were some programs judged to be effective against a range of criteria, particularly the impact on participants' training behaviour and attitude. These were customised for client groups. They employed learner-centred methodologies where projects were negotiated and were directly relevant to the participants' work, utilising self-paced learning and flexible delivery. Action-learning programs with a highly skilled facilitator/consultant were very successful. Participants who experienced this methodology began to incorporate the approach into their own training and were more open to exploring new ways to achieve outcomes than before the program. Programs designed to allow for utilisation of local knowledge, customising, networking and longer-term reflection have had the greatest impact in both the short and long term. Although initially more demanding and expensive than mass meetings for awareness raising, work-based projects with active participation by learners over an extended period appear to offer the best value for money. This is due to the fact that they have a significant impact on attitudes and behaviour. However, they should not be undertaken unless expert facilitators are available and adequate resourcing and appropriate support structures are in place. There is a place for more traditional awareness-raising seminars, but they must be carefully timed and specifically designed to excite participants to go on to more practical work-related activity.

Logistics

Many projects were unable to meet deadlines, often slowed down by the time it took to establish, plan and attract participants. Were the deadlines for funding use unrealistic or would a more targeted approach have made it easier to encourage individuals and enterprises to be involved? Again, flexible projects geared to the needs of clients were more likely to be judged successful. Given the nature of the concepts, and often the extent of behaviour change required, longer contact over an extended time period was desirable.

Timing of programs was an issue, especially for awareness-raising sessions. Target groups had to see an immediate need, and factors such as the availability of relevant industry competency standards needed to be taken into account. Federal funding requirements often led to poor scheduling and unrealistic deadlines.

There were a number of criticisms (particularly from industry) regarding the amount of paperwork required, ambiguous guidelines and poor communication generally.

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Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Formal assessment of projects has been used largely as a justification for funding allocation, with narrow criteria and few mechanisms for sharing learning with others. There is potential for much more ongoing monitoring and cross-project sharing.

Some projects offer individual participants accreditation, but care must be taken that this does not then drive the project. Sometimes there was a major discrepancy between assessment requirements and learner needs and interests. When this occurred, participants tended to ignore assessment processes they regarded as irrelevant to their learning, in favour of worthwhile project outcomes.

Detailed review of past PD programs

The review of PD programs identified issues relevant to future planning as outlined in the key findings. This section provides a more detailed explanation, with specific examples. These are discussed under two headings: issues at project level and systemic level. Systemic issues relate to the conceptualisation, funding and management of PD programs at national and State level. Project issues relate to the management, delivery and methodology and evaluation of individual projects within a program.

Issues at systems level

PD as a strategy for change

The training reform agenda was an intervention to bring about major change to significant aspects of the VET sector's goals, roles, structures and methods. Given the discontinuous nature of the proposed changes, it could not be assumed that those operating within the system would make a smooth transition to new paradigms and modes of action. PD programs have a vital role to play in supporting the change process.

A strategic approach

For PD to be successful as a tool for radical change, a strategic perspective must be adopted at all management levels. This involves considering the context within which a program is operating. It also includes defining exactly what it is to be achieved within the broader context of the TRA, as well as within its own boundaries. In a strategic approach, possible target groups are identified and evaluated, with clear decisions made about why some groups are selected for funding above others. Programs are designed specifically to meet the needs of, and provide benefits for, members of that target group. Choices are made between alternative strategies, with some strategies being high-cost, low-return and others offering potentially more value for effort. A strategic approach also involves structuring and resourcing programs to make it easier

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to achieve goals, ongoing monitoring, the ability to change tack as required, and the integration of formal mechanisms so that learning can be shared within and across programs.

PD as national strategy

It was outside the scope of this review to consider the national perspective in detail. However, it would appear that, at a national level, PD programs are viewed as a means to an end. They are a strategy to increase understanding and skills, change perception and, ultimately, change behaviour, to enable the reform of the VET sector.

However, the sense of PD as a strategic endeavour seemed to be lost as programs were implemented. When evaluations of State and national programs were considered together, a picture emerged of a fragmented system with programs operating largely independently of each other, despite having the same general goals. Although some individual programs and projects did adopt a strategic approach, indications are that, overall, PD has been a high-cost, low-return lever for system-wide change.

Individuals, reference groups and departments were responsible for conceptualising and coordinating the PD which underpinned the TRA. However, funding and reporting structures were more likely to emphasise the differences between programs, rather than realise synergies. Thus, in most States, AVTS, CBT in Action and the National Transition Program (NTP) operated largely independently of each other, with separate coordinators, project teams, offices and/or funding. The difficulty of working together was identified as an issue in several evaluations.

- One striking exception emerged in Tasmania where, more by accident than design, a one-stop shop for AVTS, CBT in Action and concurrent government-funded programs was established. Its success offers a powerful argument for more deliberate program integration. Apart from leading to identified cost efficiencies, the simplified, customer-oriented approach appears to have made a considerable difference to the level of enterprise participation in PD programs. It has also affected the program coordinator's ability to tailor training to meet enterprise needs, as well as improving client satisfaction and specific enterprise advances.

  However, even where a strategic decision to encourage integration at State level is made, it is not enough on its own. There must be mechanisms to support and monitor this, and ownership at program level.

- In South Australia, collaboration between CBVET and AVTS was intended (AVTS funds allocated to the CBVET pool to support this), but little contact occurred in reality. Evaluators reported an overlap of activities and the ineffective use of funds.

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A strategic approach at program level

The AVTS was conceived as a strategic change program and a strategic approach was deliberately fostered at State implementation level. With the notable exception of this scheme, it appears that most programs operated in traditional mode, more concerned with allocating and coordinating funding than with some of the deeper issues. If they had strategic frameworks, these were not referred to in the evaluations, and there was little indication in the outline of activities that a strategic approach had been adopted. Goals were broad and vague, with little or no rationale offered for choice of funding recipients. In addition, steering committees functioned as funding allocators only and monitoring and formal evaluation mechanisms were minimal.

The AVTS program offers useful insights into the development of a strategic approach to PD that is followed through at all levels.

- The Federal coordinating body allocated funds, time and expertise for the development of State strategic plans that aligned with the overall strategic framework.

- AVTS was one of only a few programs to realise the benefits of PD not only for practitioners but also for program decision-makers, using part of funds to provide training in strategic planning.

- Each State developed a plan, attempting to take into account a range of factors external to the program (e.g., the State's strategic needs, specific industry needs, regional issues).

- Evaluations of some State programs commented on the positive impact of a clear focus. Some AVTS State plans were less effective, reflecting a grasp of the rhetoric more than the underpinnings of strategic thinking. This suggests that sufficient time must be allocated for training those with little background and to developing the plan itself.

- The Queensland program specifically targeted key client groups who could work as messengers for the broader community; that is, they chose to design their strategies to reach a designated audience and, by implication, excluded others. This gave the program a focus, and led to the inclusion of diverse groups, including those usually perceived as hard to reach.

Intra-program roles and relationships

Difficulties identified in coordinating Federal and State efforts within a program could be seen as logistical or communications problems. However, they could also be a symptom of the lack of strategic perspective, with each part of the system perceiving itself as a separate entity with no shared goals. In evaluations, State-level programs were often represented as the 'us' in an us/them relationship with Federal coordinators.

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These programs suffered from a lack of expected support from Federal bodies, a lack of coordination of materials production, poor timing, and impossible deadlines and expectations.

Federal/State roles and responsibilities

There was widespread perception that a State program should act as a conduit for the national program, with a number of State programs expecting a range of services from the Federal body and defining their roles narrowly.

- For example, Tasmania's AVTS coordinators bemoaned the fact that they had to produce their own materials and called for this issue to be addressed in future. However, the materials they were 'forced' to develop were found by clients to be relevant, practical and of long-term value.

This raises questions about the 'one-size-fits-all' approach that permeates the VET sector, efficiency versus effectiveness, the need for glossy written materials and the potential value of local knowledge. These issues were not addressed as part of any evaluation, but the answers are vital to the overall effectiveness of any Federally coordinated program.

Program/project operations

Individual projects were often treated as separate entities within a program and were left largely to their own devices. Again, this can be seen as a symptom of a non-strategic approach. Indicators of this include:

- Programs allocated most of the available funding to individual projects and little to maintaining an active support and coordination role. Coordinators did not appear to recognise the need for this at the planning stage, but several commented in evaluations that 'extra' funds should have been provided for this role.

- Program managers were often primarily administrators involved in selection processes and auditing of guideline requirements. Several evaluations concluded that this was a mistake and that the manager should have had a broader role.

- Steering committees were involved largely in selecting funding recipients, with no mechanisms to utilise their expertise throughout the program in monitoring project progress or maintaining an overview of program.

- Lack of ongoing support (funding, training, meetings) for individual project coordinators.

- No formal sharing mechanisms, so little learning was formally passed between projects until the end.

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- Reporting requirements focussed on meeting minimum criteria to justify funding (e.g. the number of participants, not who and why).

Who was targeted? Who should be targeted?

Apart from the usual provisos relating to equity and access for designated disadvantaged groups, until now it seems that issues regarding potential target groups have rested largely with program selection committees. However, there are implications at national, State, program and project level that should be further explored.

Strategic selection of target groups

Selecting participants for programs is potentially a strategic decision, but may not have been treated as such. Evaluations usually described the selection process used, but the relationship to broader objectives and specific criteria for selection was not discussed. The reports reveal:

- Most programs advertised and waited for the applications to flood in. Only two programs mentioned actively pursuing participants. (Both had strategically selected target groups, so knew who they wanted and why.)
- A relatively low participation of designated disadvantaged groups in most programs.
    - It is often difficult to determine participation levels of these groups at all due to inadequate record-keeping.
    - Few projects appear to have specifically targeted disadvantaged groups (e.g. regional programs, rural enterprises). Those that did often had few participants.
- Some potential candidates were identified as more likely to be 'successful' than others.
    - The South Australian 1995 AVTS evaluation recommended selection of candidates that could demonstrate strong networks of relevant contacts and a demonstrated track record of success.
    - Most evaluations reinforced the need for clear selection guidelines and criteria.

There is obviously a concern at program level regarding effective use of resources, which may lead (quite reasonably) to the selection of candidates with the best track record, the most support structures already in place and the most experience. This may well raise the chances of greater success, but will preclude some of the groups in the 'too hard' basket and omit those who have not already proved they can achieve.

This raises several issues for the future. How can PD programs successfully reach the large numbers of practitioners and enterprises who have not had anything to do with

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PD in the last 4 years? Should this be part of what constitutes 'success'? Should selection criteria include groups such as 'those not active in training reforms', 'groups with limited experience in flexible delivery', 'individuals who have not been involved in formal PD for some years' or 'TAFE lecturers who are reluctant or not confident in making contact with on-the-job trainers to provide an integrated learning experience for participants'? Who will be responsible for them? This is a systemic issue that can only be resolved through a strategic decision-making process.

Practitioner focus

- Almost all PD has been aimed at front-line practitioners. They have mostly come from TAFE, but numbers of industry-based trainers are increasing.
    - When designing programs, it was important to perceive these two groups as distinct entities with different background experience, pressures and needs (although this did not always happen). They needed to see that this distinction had been made and have their own situations clearly acknowledged. However, many of their PD concerns were similar, and both groups responded positively to work-based, practical PD negotiated to suit their own situations.
    - Few programs exploited the potential to use PD to cross the barriers between industry and TAFE. Just inviting members of the two groups to the same seminar was not enough, and caused both groups to feel that the program was not sufficiently cognisant of their different contexts and needs.

PD participants

- All programs/projects have operated with volunteers:
    - who usually perceived a need to find out more and improve their skills, and
    - who tended to be motivated even when not given time release and remuneration.

- Most evaluations referred to the large numbers of individuals who did not respond, but who were perceived to 'need the program most'. Only a few projects were successful in attracting members of the 'hard' and 'too hard' baskets. These projects pursued and wooed potential clients.

- Although there were a few spectacular successes in encouraging small business involvement, barriers to participation in this sector were largely unbreeched. Where small business was specifically targeted (e.g. QLD AVTS), PD programs reported more problems than successes.

- Those who participated in entry-level programs (especially awareness-raising and generic-structured workshops) usually wanted a next step and were disappointed that there was nothing already in place for them.

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What attracted participants?

- Government funding was identified as an incentive to applications for projects, although action-learning-based projects reported participants prepared to continue PD programs without such funding.

- Personal contact by program organisers was important, particularly at enterprise level.

- Some form of reward or incentive was needed for participants (e.g., the up-front course fee refunded on successful completion [SA Rural AVTS], release time and career-path links through accreditation).

Effective leadership

Program leadership emerged as a key factor in overall success.[b]

- Program managers with wide experience who were actively involved in coordinating projects and managing program-based activities had a powerful impact. They appeared to be 'big picture' thinkers, with both industry and VET sector knowledge, combining the skills of effective change agents and sound administrators.

- Project managers (and those responsible locally when a project involved several sites) were most successful when they really believed in their project, had a high profile in the organisation, and had been given clear responsibility and the necessary support.

- The most successful programs had managers who provided ongoing support to funding recipients. In addition, they established links between individual projects and gave professional expertise, possibly in concert with a support team of experts.
    - The South Australian AVTS 1994 evaluation highlights a relatively large amount (26% of funds) spent on administration, as opposed to that spent on actual projects. However, it points out that most of this funding supported the release of a coordinator, which was considered necessary for success.

Logistics

The evaluations identified logistical factors that made it harder for PD programs to function effectively, but tended not to cite those that worked well. (Perhaps, by definition, logistics that work are those you don't notice.)

[b] The comments in this section are based more on reading between the lines than on specific references in the reports. This is an area where further research could yield useful results.

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Timing

A number of reports complained about the lack of availability of Federally supplied information (e.g. about AVTS), and/or the lack of the development of competency standards for their projct, in a particular industry at the time they were to run. (Future projects will be faced with similar dilemmas.) Evaluations suggest the need for 'just-in-time' training and advise postponing the project if key elements are not available.

- TAFE, industry practitioners and enterprise managers were more likely to be interested in participating if they knew competency standards had been developed. Then, there was a sense of urgency to find out more, and information sessions offered at such times were well attended. PD could also be tailored to explore examples relevant to the industry and background knowledge of participants. When generic courses were offered on the basis that 'everyone will be faced with this eventually', they had little impact and feedback was negative.

- Lack of Federally produced support materials was identified as a failing in several instances. However, programs that produced their own information and kits were able to interpret general guidelines to suit specific target groups, so materials may not be a key element.

Funding

- Funding delay in receiving Federal funds was reported as a consistent problem across most programs.

- There was a need for flexibility to meet deadlines for funding use (this may involve funding over two financial years).

- Many requests were made for greater allocation of funding for administration of the program overall (to assist in materials preparation and allow time to coordinate and monitor). This raises questions regarding how programs and projects are perceived initially and what 'administration' means. For example, fewer individual projects could have been funded in order to allocate funds to a managerial coordination role.

- Funding models were not always cost effective, equitable or strategic. For example, SA AVTS 1994 allocated funds to TAFE institutes on a per capita basis which discriminated against regional institutes and significantly increased program administration costs.

Paperwork

All evaluations identified the importance of clear guidelines and the need to establish criteria for selection (although they did not necessarily make a link with strategy).

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- Some standardised applications were seen to be inappropriate (one program commented that 70% of initial applications were returned for reworking).

- Industry was generally scathing about bureaucratic requirements and the difficulty of understanding bureaucratic language.

- There were many calls for standardised evaluation formats to increase the collection of comparable data and raise the standard of evaluation processes.

Reporting and evaluation

Evaluation is an issue at program and project levels.

Many programs and projects were not designed with ongoing monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of the process. An exception was the 1993 evaluation report on 'The provision of training in the delivery and assessment of competency-based training' project funded by DEET.

- External evaluators commented on the limitations of post-program study, lack of evaluation guidelines and lapse of time between program completion and evaluation that reduced the usefulness of the exercise.

- A need for formal standardised guidelines was identified in several programs.

- Projects tended to use 'happy sheets', rather than comprehensive systematic evaluation.

- Those responsible for evaluation did not always fulfil their role adequately, especially if they were TAFE institute contact people who had no real ownership or involvement in the PD program.

Reporting criteria sent out messages about what were the most valued and influenced selection processes, criteria and reporting.

- AVTS programs are required to report on the number of people involved in the projects (this is one of only three reporting requirements). This could be interpreted to mean that more is better and could influence the choice of methodology and funding recipients.
    - One evaluation recommended that because project applicants consistently overestimated the number of people they could attract, they should be asked to provide better evidence to support their claims.
    - The National Staff Development Committee (NSDC) programs evaluation cites the need for appropriate and rigorous assessment to ensure that PD is taken seriously by TAFE institutes.

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- A preoccupation with numbers of people touched by a program (a reporting requirement) could lead some programs to go for quick, short, awareness-raising sessions. But are these worth the money in the long term?

Issues at project level

A strategic approach at project level

Each PD project is a microcosm of the broader program and could also benefit from a stronger perception of itself as a change program, with all that that entails. Project teams have to see a project within its context, so they need to take external factors into account when planning the design of the project. For example, the project manager must recognise the need to meet enterprise requirements, win top management support and organise the logistics of actual PD programs.

PD as a model of NTF concepts and methodologies

Across all programs reviewed, there was clear evidence that those who put into practice the concepts and methodologies supported by the NTF were more likely to be successful—providing they had the expertise—than those who opted for more traditional approaches.

Client-driven approaches

An essential aspect of a strategic approach is the design of client-driven programs. Reports revealed a number of critical issues to be taken into account in the design of future programs.

- Effective outcomes were more likely when enterprise managers and program employees drove PD design, monitoring and follow-up. 'Let the industry run the show. PD can offer solutions to problems and make us aware of options, but a business needs to have a focus on what it needs to achieve.'

- Companies did not necessarily accept the assumption that PD or the government training agenda was worthwhile by definition. 'Industry needs to question government initiatives to see they fit in with and support the path chosen.' AVTS TAS 1995/1996 p.5

- Facilitators, program managers and program design had to be flexible. 'We need people who are on the end of a phone and who will visit us quickly—I am against weekly or routine meetings, I want to move fast when we need to.' AVTS TAS 1995/1996 p.3

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- Language of the sector, and of materials produced, was often seen as alienating, especially by industry managers and practitioners.
    - Facilitators reported having to act as interpreters and/or rewrite materials to suit audiences.
    - Low levels of understanding of new concepts and training reform initiatives in industry meant participants felt inadequate. 'VET sector' language reinforced, or even created, this feeling.

- INCAT was concerned that the TAFE system of recognition of current competencies was unwieldy, complicated and stressful for their training staff.

Innovative methodologies

- TAFE staff and industry-based trainers wanted:
    - PD that was directly relevant to the work they were doing;
    - customised, not generic programs (with relevant case studies, local knowledge utilised, practical work related to own areas);
    - flexible delivery options. There was a general enthusiasm for approaches that made it easier to access PD at times to suit all participants.

- Learner-centred methodologies that allowed flexibility, a mix of experience/practice theory/reflection, and structured contact with other learners, had a much greater long-term impact on attitudes and behaviour. In addition, these methodologies appeared to lead to continued organisational and individual PD, even in the absence of further funding. However, in the short term, they are not as cost effective as other options.

Perceptual barriers

The TAFE system is based on the premise that training is a good thing, but it may only be good for other people! Evaluations of training involving TAFE staff suggested a widespread perception within the TAFE system that PD training is an 'add on' rather than a tool for achieving organisational or system-wide change. The following indicators emerged from the reports:

- Many TAFE institutes lacked mechanisms for sharing what a participant might learn from any PD activity, with others who were not there.

- Many participants felt that what they were doing was not valued by the organisation. Lack of overt support from supervisors/upper management and structural and logistical issues undermined individual experience of PD.
    - The NSDC evaluation of three different training packages (1995) found that insufficient support was a feature of a number of training packages and programs delivered to TAFE participants. Where successful implementation occurred, it 'depended significantly on the effectiveness of planning and

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implementation at the local level' and this, in turn, depended on a specific person having been given responsibility.

- PD was often not perceived to be part of normal work, but instead provided competition with it. 'Operational priorities' continually took precedence.
  - The needs of participants in action-learning programs and the Return to Industry program were ignored. Participants were forced to miss meetings due to other work commitments and some dropped out as it became clear no value was placed on what they were doing.
  - In TAFE institutes where senior management did not appreciate the scheme, liaison responsibility was given to people with little interest or expertise, and treated as additional workload. No other support (time or resources) was supplied.
  - There was a widespread lack of support at institute level for the TAFE RTI program. Often individuals had to really push to organise their own placements, and perceived that they were penalised for being away for any length of time (e.g. loss of teaching areas etc.).

- The lack of involvement of part-time staff (a large percentage of the TAFE workforce), or no remuneration for attendance, also reinforced the perception of PD as an individual's responsibility, rather than the organisation's.

Facilitator role and expertise

Evaluations revealed many instances of high-quality facilitation, but also many cases where participants specifically felt that facilitators were not well organised, experienced, or responsive. Success was reported when PD deliverers demonstrated:

- A broad understanding of the context of participants and expertise to provide the right advice.
  - Management of Purity Supermarkets (Tasmania) had a clear vision of where they wanted the company to go. They saw the AVTS workplace assessment PD program as one of the strategies to achieve this and wanted to drive the process. The facilitators contributed knowledge and expertise the company did not have. 'They brought us action-learning and it has been a catalyst for change within the company—it involves people in active learning on the job which is our main goal. It is a model for the way Purity can work.'

- The ability to negotiate with clients regarding emphasis, content, delivery.

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- The ability to tailor approaches to suit different levels of skill and knowledge (which is a basic requirement of a good teacher, but lack of attention to this was mentioned in some reports).

- The Victorian OTS Staff Development for Workplace Training Program highlighted the need for expertise within the VET sector in flexible and work-based delivery.

- There was a strong message from industry that trainers must be the right people for the job in terms of personality, commitment, expertise and professional networks, understanding of industry problems and issues. It was much better to have a program run by someone with broad experience in all aspects of PD than someone contracted on a short-term basis 'to deliver training'.

Selection of methodologies

Approaches that allowed for utilisation of local knowledge, customising, networking and longer-term reflection have had the greatest impact in both the short and long term. Although they may seem more demanding and more expensive in the short term than mass meetings for awareness-raising, work-based projects with active participation by learners over an extended period appear to offer the best value for money. This is because they have a significant impact on attitudes and behaviour.

A number of approaches were used in the programs reviewed, but face-to-face activities were by far the most prevalent. There has been only limited development of self-paced learning kits, videos, video conferencing and multi-media interactive packages as part of PD programs to date. The following is a summary of findings across all reports reviewed.

Awareness-raising sessions

The majority of PD programs reviewed relied mainly on seminars and lectures aimed at explaining the concepts and practice of training reform, CBT, AVTS, etc. The PD programs were:

- often generic, promoted to a broad range of potential participants;
- sometimes offered to specific target groups but more often offered jointly to industry and TAFE practitioners, managers, and private providers;
- often met with a mixed response. Some reported success, but evaluations were often based on the participant saying, 'Yes, now I understand better', yet, if tested, this may not have been the case.
    - SA evaluators of AVTS programs were not impressed by participants' conceptual understanding. They highlighted the danger of participants thinking they understood when they had not really made the mental shifts required.

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- Many participants did not feel the sessions were long enough to address the issues in anything like enough depth, but the follow-up was often slow or non-existent.

These sessions raised other issues.

- The SA AVTS evaluation suggested one-off conferences, but seminars may not be worth the effort or expense. They seem to reach a lot of people but have very limited impact. South Australia had trouble getting participants at all, unless the seminars were obviously related to the work at hand.

- QLD AVTS mostly used information sessions and structured workshops, but found that the more 'hands on' the sessions were, the better the understanding.

- Timing may be an issue—some industries, regions had a high turn out for awareness-raising seminars if they were held at the same time as the competency standards were released.

- To be effective, awareness-raising sessions had to lead on quickly to further activities.

Action-learning

Action-learning (AL) is strongly supported in almost every instance in which it has been used, but it has been utilised only in situations where expert facilitators and adequate resources were available.

The longitudinal evaluation of CBT in Action (1996) offers a comprehensive study of the impact of AL as a method of PD. It has identified:

- enduring and continuing skills development;
- a greater openness to new ways of working and a trend towards serious attempts to adopt CBT by learning set participants;
- the spread of CBT learning across participating organisations; and
- substantial impact on staff development and work practices, including a marked change in attitude to AL, skills in questioning/reflection, increased confidence and use of work-based learning strategies across the organisation.

Messages from other reports support these observations, but identify issues for future consideration.

- The NEXUS program queries the notion that AL will be more cost effective than other methods, but believes it is more likely to deliver long-term change.

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- Several reports commented that it takes time for participants to understand and appreciate the approach. This must be allowed for in planning, and expertise is needed to facilitate learning about the methodology.
    - One project reported difficulty in using the approach with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group and quickly abandoned the attempt, feeling it was 'not suited to the participants' learning style'.
    - Participants in other programs reported finding AL threatening at first and very different from their expectations of how learning should occur (e.g. NEXUS reported TAFE and RMIT participants had little experience of AL and found it difficult). They still thought in terms of traditional, familiar models of PD where learners progress through a program, rather than integrate learning into a work-related project.
    - Having persevered, and with appropriate support, industry- and TAFE-based participants in different programs using the methodology were enthusiastic about AL. They were generally keen to develop their skills as facilitators so they could utilise the approach with workplace learners.

Self-paced learning packages

- Self-paced learning packages were utilised in three NSDC training packages for TAFE staff. Users were generally enthusiastic about the quality of user-friendly materials and flexibility. They cautioned that tutor support was still needed (especially for sensitive areas such as the gender agenda). It was also important that users had the opportunity to interact with others. Users also wanted a mix of delivery approaches.

- The 'WA Staff Development for the Workplace' Training Program suggested that there was a need for more pre-program counselling of learners. Users cautioned that in this program the learning resources tended to be geared to assessment requirements, rather than to the needs of the learners and their projects. Strong organisational support was required but not always provided.

Mentoring

Mentoring is emerging as a powerful new approach. It is identified as a significant factor in the success of the NEXUS PD programs (RMIT/TAFE collaboration).

Logistics

The evaluations identified logistical factors that made it harder for PD projects to function effectively.

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Timing

TAFE, industry practitioners and enterprise managers were more likely to be interested in participating if they knew competency standards had been developed. Then, there was a sense of urgency to find out more, and information sessions offered at such times were well attended. PD could be tailored to explore examples relevant to the industry and background knowledge of participants. When generic courses were offered on the basis that 'everyone will be faced with this eventually', they had little impact, and feedback was negative.

Scheduling and deadlines

As with any training, when and for how long a PD activity is run can be crucial to its success.

- Timing had to suit enterprise (and individual participant) needs, requiring:
  - flexible schedules for companies with their changing workloads;
  - after hours delivery to take shift work into account;
  - negotiated deadlines for individual- and enterprise-based AL projects.

- Longer contact was a necessary requirement. Given the need to grapple with both conceptual and practical issues, formal contact time spread over several weeks was reported to provide an opportunity for reflection and application, followed by debriefing and further input.

- Many projects in different programs consistently underestimated the amount of time needed to attract participants (especially from industry), complete activities and evaluate the project. This was usually seen as the fault of the project, but examination of the program revealed an original timeline of 3–6 months which may itself have been unrealistic.

- Tight program funding deadlines led to unsatisfactory arrangements, for example:
  - projects pushed to start at the wrong time. There were naturally problems in attracting participants to PD programs for TAFE practitioners held during exam time, but that is when one project was held;
  - industry seasonal demands and enterprise work schedules were reported to have 'interfered' with project attendance.

- Longer-term projects were often expected to follow a set, unvarying schedule (like a class timetable).

- The length of formal contact time scheduled obviously depends on the focus and methodology employed, but most reports made similar comments:

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- 1/2–1 day was not sufficient to cover all concepts and topics. Participants of several awareness-raising programs asked for structured follow-up once they'd had time to think about the first session;
- blocks of time (e.g. 3-day events) are difficult for many TAFE, industry-based and private providers to attend, and raised travel/accommodation issues for potential regional participants.

Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

Formal assessment is obviously important in stressing value to the system and potential benefit to the individual. However, formal assessment raises its own issues:

- The NSDC's three training resources (1995) tended to be driven by assessment requirements rather than learner or project needs. Interestingly, however, there was evidence that learners took things into their own hands, choosing to ignore assessment in favour of a worthwhile project outcome.

- NEXUS offers four accredited PD modules structured around work-based projects. Reports indicated that these were successful, but participants' expectations of structured, formal learning tied to accreditation were initially reinforced by the assessment orientation and worked against acceptance of the AL methodology.

- Program staff need to demonstrate potential benefits and link PD outcomes to enterprise strategic plans. It was a mistake to assume that senior managers would immediately recognise the importance of PD.

Lessons learnt

Systems level

- There needs to be greater attention paid to the design and maintenance of coordinating structures across programs to achieve synergies and utilise PD as an effective tool for change.

- Coordination, role clarification and collaboration between Federal/State bodies within a program makes a difference. However, there is no single right answer regarding the relationship. Future programs could benefit from exploring these issues.

- Programs need to be designed as entities in their own right, not just as coat hangers for individual projects. This requires consideration of all features of operations and allocating funding accordingly.

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- Program managers need a conceptual role and possibly active involvement with PD for project leaders in consulting, mediating with enterprises etc.

- Training in strategic planning should be an integral part of all programs and projects.

Program level

- The program manager's role needs to be defined broadly to encompass coordination, active participation and administration. This is a strategic decision.

- When the overall strategy is clear, program managers should be selected on the basis of the broad range of skills, experience and understanding they can bring to the program and they should be given the opportunity to utilise these as part of the role.

- Funding allocation needs to reflect the time involved in a manager's broader role, and not be perceived as detracting in any way from the amount of money available for individual projects.

- This review has highlighted the importance of effective strategic project and program management, the lack of skilled facilitators, the lack of appreciation of PD in general or NTF in particular by senior management and their role in the potential success of any PD venture. To date, most PD has been aimed at practitioners, but there is a real need to consider PD to develop greater skills and understanding of the management of PD.

- There is a need for extended criteria of success related to clear, specific objectives at both program and project levels.

- Evaluation needs to be both formative and summative, with formal mechanisms for shared learning built into programs.

- There is a real need for more effective monitoring and evaluation and this suggests a need for training in evaluation concepts and techniques for program and project coordinators.

Project level

- A PD program must provide some strategic benefit to the enterprise so that it becomes a priority for the organisation as well as for the individual participant or, as some programs discovered, other operational priorities will take precedence. PD must be directly linked to enterprise strategies and designed to support

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enterprise change. Companies must be able to see the relevance of PD for work-based trainers to their strategic plans, and be in control of decision-making.

- The program manager or a skilled facilitator operating as a consultant has an important role to play in establishing enterprise needs and assisting the development of relationships and programs to achieve enterprise and individual participant goals.

- We can learn from the reports reviewed, but should be careful not to see programs that were successful with willing volunteers as a model for attracting future target groups. These methods may not be the most appropriate for those practitioners who are more reluctant to challenge their current ways of thinking and teaching, or for industry managers less aware of the VET sector, potential training benefits, etc. However, the more client-driven, the more flexible an approach developed and maintained, the more likely the chance of success across a broad range of participants.

- There needs to be a greater focus on PD programs for project managers and liaison staff.

- Project facilitators must be experts, with breadth and depth of knowledge, and experience covering educational processes, technical areas, specific industry needs and change management issues. They must model the practices they are espousing or people become cynical and whole programs fail.

- Future programs should take into account those in the system who have now been exposed to the concepts underpinning the national training reform agenda, and others who are well advanced in putting aspects of the initiatives into practice. There are now skilled operators and best practice models that were not available to past programs that should be utilised (and ITABs are developing strong networks that can also be tapped). However, those more advanced still need support. Is the purpose to get everyone to first base, or can programs be offered to suit those who are past 'entry level'?

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Perceptions of vocational education and training staff towards recent national training reforms

MICHELE SIMONS & ROGER HARRIS

Introduction

The advent of the national training reform agenda precipitated wide-ranging changes to the provision of vocational education and training in Australia. These reforms, aimed at increasing the skill base of Australian workers, and hence the country's overall economic competitiveness, include:

- the introduction of a competency-based system of vocational education and training (VET);
- the development of national frameworks for the registration of providers, and the accreditation of courses to provide a more integrated and national VET system;
- moves to a more industry-led VET sector with a concomitant increase in provider responsiveness to client (industry) needs;
- the development of a new entry-level training system (previously AVTS, then MAATS, and now *New Apprenticeship System*);
- the development of an open training market, including the introduction of private providers into the national VET system; and
- strategies to enhance access to VET for groups, which have historically been under represented in the sector.

The VET system focusses primarily on education and training that is job (vocational) related. It includes training for entry-level workers and certificate to advanced diploma training as defined by the Australian Qualifications Framework. Providers of VET include TAFE colleges, private providers, industry-based providers, group training schemes, businesses, schools and universities. For the purposes of this paper, perspectives from private, industry and TAFE providers have been included.

VET teachers, trainers and managers are being asked to work in a system that is characterised by increased competition between providers, calls for greater accountability and the need to be able to develop cooperative and flexible training and assessment procedures with schools, industries and individual enterprises.

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This paper provides a brief summary of the literature and current research in relation to VET teachers, trainers and managers and their perceptions towards these training reforms. As an introduction to this analysis, a brief overview is provided of comments from the literature in relation to management of the change process in the implementation of reforms. This overview provides the context in which the following account of the literature and research on staff perceptions needs to be located. The next section of this paper draws on a range of literature sources and research outcomes to describe the perceptions held by key groups who are central to the training reforms. The final section of this paper brings together the evidence on how previous training reforms have been received with an overview of the new initiatives planned for the VET sector. It also explores some of the PD implications that arise from these developments.

The context

There appears to be a general consensus in the literature that management of the reform process has been problematic. Major criticisms have been made in relation to:

- variability in the scope and pace of reform within the TAFE sector and the negative impact of this on industry perceptions of TAFE and, more generally, the VET sector; (Chant Link & Associates 1992; Brough 1993; Allen Consulting Group 1994)
- the lack of industry involvement in the reform process—largely attributed to the excessively bureaucratic structures which have been established to administer the reforms and the centralised nature of the reform process. This has emphasised a uniform, standards-driven approach which does not account for the diversity of industry and enterprise needs or the realities of the market-driven, competitive environments in which industry operates; (CEDA 1995; Bright 1996)
- the polarisation of attitudes towards the reforms that is a product of lack of cooperation between sectors and the scope of change being implemented; (Byrne 1994)
- a general lack of confidence in the reforms to deliver quality outcomes that will match the rhetoric. This lack of confidence has led to a resistance to the reforms which is believed to be firmly entrenched. This resistance has its seed in the perception that the 'reforms involved an unacceptable transfer of power' from the TAFE system into the hands of industry; (Byrne 1994)
- the 'top-down' bureaucratic nature of the change process which has been largely driven by economic imperatives rather than consideration for its educational value; (Stevenson 1994; Harris 1995; Martin 1995; Peoples 1995)

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- the response of TAFE as employers to micro-economic reform which has resulted in changed working conditions for TAFE teachers and a reappraisal of the role and functions of a teacher in the new NVETS; (Holland 1992; Peoples 1995) and
- the poor quality of information provided in relation to the change process. In addition, there has been a lack of time to implement changes which in turn have acted as significant barriers to effective communication about the reform process. (Chant Link & Associates 1992; Simons 1996a)

The context for the reform process has been coloured by varying degrees of negativity and uncertainty. It has also been influenced by a range of factors, such as organisational restructuring that has occurred within the TAFE sector and the introduction of enterprise bargaining in industry. These factors, whilst not directly related to the reform processes, have impacted upon them. However, the key components of the reform process—the need for a more flexible, competitive, effective and efficient industry-led training system—have been consistently reinforced and reiterated in policy documents and by key policy-makers within the VET sector. Commitments to the introduction of a competency-based system of training, the integration of on- and off-the-job learning and assessment, flexibility in training delivery and the operationalising of the NFROT principles have been consistently emphasised. In addition, the imperative has been made that training reforms are vital for the future prosperity of the country and all Australians.

Perceptions of VET staff

Evidence suggests that there is support from teachers, trainers and managers in the VET sector in relation to various aspects of the reform agenda. These include the use of recognition of prior learning (RPL) and flexible delivery modes, the encouragement of systems to enhance the articulation and portability of qualifications, the opportunity to better serve industry and a clearer specification of what the outcomes of VET should be (Robinson 1993; Harper 1994; Hewett 1995; Lundberg 1996). Each group, however, reports varying degrees of support for some reforms, and the limited or negative effects of others. Some of these concerns are shared across all groups, while others appear to be confined to one particular group. In this section, these issues are discussed in more detail.

Perceptions of private training providers

With the advent of the training reforms, the number of private providers has grown substantially to approximately 1900 providers across all States and Territories (Australian National Training Authority 1996). Many private providers perceive that the reforms have been imposed on their sector. Whilst these reforms are not compulsory, there is 'a strong motivation' to adopt changes in order to compete

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successfully with public providers. There is a feeling that the change process is driven by a reactionary mentality, rather than characterised by a strategic approach to bring about desired goals (Martin 1995).

Private providers note that the work to deliver nationally accredited programs is expensive, time consuming and complex. Rules relating to accreditation and registration are seen as particularly difficult to follow (Hartley & Garrett 1996). The introduction of national competency standards has curtailed some providers' ability to fully address local needs and has resulted in a perceived 'loss of the uniqueness which gave [providers] their market niche' (Martin 1995).

Another problematic aspect of reforms for private providers is related to the development of the competitive training market. Some private providers feel they do not have equal access to the money and expertise needed to keep abreast of the latest training reform developments. The development of real competition within the sector is also inhibited by the ability of public providers, supported by a vast infrastructure, to submit tenders that do not reflect the true cost of providing training (Martin 1995).

Perceptions of industry training providers

Recent presentations of best-practice case studies at national conferences (e.g. the Australian National Training Authority [ANTA] conference held in Adelaide in July 1996) have highlighted many of the benefits that accrue for industries where training reforms have been implemented. These include enhancing the ability of enterprises to compete in a 'highly vigorous environment' and build the skills of employees so that they are able to meet the rapidly changing demands of work (Heron 1996). Sometimes, training reforms have been implemented in a manner where there are 'clearly linked standards, assessment, curriculum and qualifications' in combination with the commitment of industry to make the system work. In these cases, they have been shown to be successful and very strongly supported (Jones 1996).

Across some industry providers, there has been debate on the nature of CBT and the degree to which it has been implemented. A study conducted by the Group for Research in Employment and Training at Charles Sturt University (Martin 1995) found that non-TAFE providers were more likely to have implemented CBT (according to the definition used in the study). This was largely because of their newness to vocational training and their adoption of aspects of the reforms as part of their introduction to the field (Martin 1995). This study also concluded that 'certain features of CBT such as self-paced learning and workplace assessment are not being adopted to any significant extent' (Martin 1995).

Key industry spokespersons have noted that the training reforms have largely adopted an industry-wide perspective at the expense of an enterprise focus. This has reduced the

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ability of the training system to meet the training needs of enterprises, both in the training of entry-level workers and increasing the skills of existing workers (Bishop 1995; Dangerfield 1995; Robinson 1996). In line with private providers, industry representatives have frequently commented on the overly bureaucratic and complex nature of current accreditation and recognition procedures (see CEDA 1995). There is also a strong perception, particularly held by small business, that, despite the reform processes, institutionally based VET providers are poorly placed to understand their needs and provide meaningful training in a flexible and timely manner (Firebrace 1995).

The lack of availability of relevant, accessible and useful information on the central components of the reform agenda is a key theme that emerges constantly in commentaries on the NVETS (CEDA 1995). There is also considerable evidence which suggests that many people within industry are not aware of what CBT is. Mansfield (cited in Blakeley 1996) refers to the work of ACIRRT, which described a study conducted with a cross-section of five key industry groups. Within these groups, 73% of respondents had never heard of CBT and 72% were unaware of competency standards.

Perceptions of TAFE staff

Like their counterparts working in private and industry sectors of the NVETS, teachers working in TAFE institutes have applauded many aspects of the training reform, particularly those relating to articulation and portability of qualifications. However, there has also been considerable debate within the TAFE sector regarding a number of reforms. The issue of training reforms has been the focus of only a small amount of research in the past 6 years. In addition, there has been an even smaller research effort focussing on private providers and their experiences of working with the reforms. Thus, there may appear to be a greater weight of evidence to suggest that the implementation of training reform has been more difficult within the TAFE sector. However, this needs to be balanced against the lack of research which might allow more equitable comparisons to be made between public and private training providers.

It is also important to note that, as the predominate provider of VET, the TAFE sector was set to be a key player in the reform process. This role also carried the risk that the change process might be more challenging in an institutionalised environment with, perhaps, more points of resistance to be overcome. Hence, it should not be surprising that, from the TAFE sector, criticisms are more prevalent than expressions of support in discourses on the training reforms. There are many teachers within the TAFE system who are supportive of the reform process and are involved in leading-edge, best-practice programs (e.g. the Hair and Beauty Program in TAFE SA which has been cited in best-practice case studies). In the literature that discusses perceptions of these reforms and their impact, the positive experiences of these teachers are not as prevalent

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as those of teachers, managers and other stakeholders (unions, universities) who express concern about the impact of change for public VET providers.

As with other sectors, there is considerable debate within public VET providers about the nature of CBT and the degree to which it has been implemented. Debate over the essential and desirable feature of a CBT system abound (for a comprehensive overview see Harris 1995). Varying perspectives on this issue shape the extent to which any accurate statement about the implementation of CBT can be made (Smith *et al.* 1995). The weight of evidence suggests that CBT has been implemented in a variety of ways, with varying degrees of success across TAFE (Smith *et al.* 1995; Simons 1996b).

CBT is viewed as a system that allows a 'greater focus on students from a given perspective' and an 'enabling system to help [TAFE] capitalise on what it does best' (Harper 1994). However, it needs to be noted that some TAFE teachers believe that features attributed to the new CBT system were an integral part of the 'pre-reform' vocational education and training sector. From their perspective, implementation of the reform process had limited impact, other than to bureaucratise overly their teaching practice (Simons 1996b). Teachers have reported problems with the use of competency-based assessment (CBA), particularly in subjects that are largely theoretically based (Nankervis 1994). Other issues that have been highlighted in the literature include:

- the number of re-tests a student should be permitted;
- the development of re-testing instruments, tutoring for re-tests and how this is counted in workloads;
- the increased workload in relation to assessment and record keeping in a CBA system;
- the use of ungraded assessment, which was viewed as de-motivating for students and contributing to a drop in standards by teachers;
- the perception that teachers' 'tacit judgement was challenged by CBT'—this being largely attributed to the changed processes for justifying and recording decisions made in assessments;
- the appropriateness of graded assessment and how it might be implemented; and
- the extent to which assessment practices within a CBT system (which are viewed as overly time consuming and contributing significantly to teachers' workloads) are reducing the amount of time and energy that can be devoted to facilitating student learning and working with students who are in need of additional help (Robinson 1993; Alexander 1995).

Recent studies by Cornford highlight teachers' perceptions that CBT 'hindered or severely hindered' attainment of effective levels of skills (approximately 62% of respondents in each study held this view) (Cornford 1995; 1996). These studies also found that 54% of these teachers believed that the skill level achieved by their students was 'low' or 'very low' and they were encountering problems with competency-based

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assessment. In addition, there was a perception that the modular format of the curriculum was leading to a deficit in theory and practical skills in later modules.

A study of commercial cookery teachers and their experiences of implementing CBT displays a similar trend (Roux-Salembien *et al.* 1996). High levels of dissatisfaction with implementing CBT were recorded by this group of teachers. They also reported a degree of uncertainty in relation to key features of the CBT system (e.g. that criterion-referenced assessment is a feature of CBT). Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with student performance, especially in relation to motivation. This was attributed to the non-graded nature of assessments.

Research conducted by Queensland TAFE revealed a range of areas in relation to the implementation of CBT in which teachers rated their level of knowledge, understanding and abilities as low (Choy *et al.* 1996). These areas included a mix of general policies (e.g. in relation to NFROT and RPL) as well as skills in preparing resources and using CBT and competency-based assessment.

The literature also revealed other perceptions held by teachers of CBT. They suggested that because CBT has its roots in industry, it is not applicable across a broad range of service industries (Schedvin 1992). In addition, teachers believed that competencies specify the ***minimum*** standards required. This raised questions as to whether the quality of professions could be maintained under a CBT system (Harper 1994).

Moves to a national system for the development of curricula have not been favourably perceived by teachers. The lack of opportunities to participate in national curriculum projects has often led to the perception that teachers were assumed to be consumers of a product which they formerly would have had a role in developing (Simons 1996b). This fragmentation and separation of the roles of curriculum designer and implementer has, in many cases, led to a sense of frustration and annoyance in teachers, particularly if they view the products of the curriculum process as flawed in any case. A South Australian report on the implementation of CBT in that State noted that the quality of resources—including modules, teacher guide books and student workbooks—was a crucial factor in shaping teacher acceptance of change (South Australian Department for Employment, Training and Further Education 1993). There is a perception that the increased influence of industry on the curriculum might impact negatively on the learning process. More time would be taken in determining whether industry-determined outcomes have been achieved, rather than focussing on facilitating students' learning (Lundberg 1996).

The process of RPL has been viewed by some teachers as a costly and time-consuming process to implement (Chant Link & Associates 1992). In addition, the process of implementation for this part of the reform was undertaken with little consideration for the impact it would have on teachers' workloads.

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The use of competition and open tendering to force the pace of change and increase the quality of VET provision has been questioned by a number of teachers. This was viewed by some as an unnecessary part of the reform process and undermining the (sometimes) many years of work that had been put into building collaborative links with industry and other training providers (Hewett 1995; Simons 1996b).

It is also interesting to note the comments made by TAFE teachers in relation to fee-for-service activities (Chant Link & Associates 1992). This activity is viewed as a means by which a large number of teachers could gain greater understanding of industry needs. However, teachers believe their opportunities to participate in such activities have been limited by a number of factors, including a lack of flexibility in timetabling of classes and a perceived lack of skills and industry knowledge.

A view was held that the moves towards a more market-driven VET sector would impact negatively on TAFE's responsibilities in relation to the needs of groups such as the unemployed, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other disadvantaged groups (Hewett 1992).

There is a strong notion that teachers have become recipients of change, rather than partners in the change process (Chant Link & Associates 1992). In exploring reasons for the variable pace of change within the TAFE system, it has been noted that some teachers may perceive the recent reforms as distracting them from what they believe to be their primary role—that of working in the classroom to educate people for a particular industry. The reforms imply the need for a shift in focus from student needs to a greater focus on industry needs—a move that is not viewed favourably by some teachers. Chant Link & Associates, in their report to the Victorian State Training Board, make the point that teachers are 'not negative to change' (Chant Link & Associates 1992). They are, however, negative about the perceived lack of support given to them as they work through the change process. Teachers were also perceived to be negative about changes in the reform process that took them away from the classroom which, the report suggests, is the site from which they gain the most intrinsic rewards.

Teachers are also faced with the difficulties of working in a system which itself is in transition (Robinson 1993). Concerns about whether teachers 'are on the right track'—when that track is viewed as constantly changing—give rise to stressful working conditions and a loss of self-efficacy and autonomy for the teacher.

The Chant Link & Associates report is also notable for its exploration of the different perceptions held by contract and part-time teachers in TAFE (Chant Link & Associates 1992). In many respects, the report supports the notion that these teachers are more open to change because 'they are unlikely to do things that would not maximise their chances of teaching in the future'. However, many part-time and contract staff often lack the skills and qualifications held by full-time staff. Hence, they might be limited in their capacity to deal with complex issues (e.g. those in

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relation to assessment). The report also suggests that the level of industrial experience held by a teacher is an important factor in determining how they view the training reforms. The greater the length of time since a teacher was in industry, the less the teacher seemed to be able to relate to the training reforms.

There seems to be a considerable degree of consensus in the literature that one of the outcomes of the reform process is a changed role for the TAFE teacher. This new role will require the development of a different level of knowledge, skills and attributes from that held by the classroom-bound teacher.

Writing about this changed role, John Blakeley believes the new VET teacher will need to be able to:

> discuss, advise, negotiate training plans, communicate with a wide range of employers, problem solve, facilitate partnerships with employers, have a detailed knowledge of industry culture, carry well-developed workplace assessor skills and be able to 'grow the business' (Blakeley 1996).

Teachers' understandings of these new roles and the implications they have for the manner in which work practices need to change is a critical issue which needs considerable attention. Despite the perceived lack of inclusion of teachers as partners in the changes processes, the reforms have carried with them the implicit requirement that teachers will need to adapt to the changed environment in which VET is delivered to increasingly diverse groups of clients. These changes require an increased focus on the industry/training provider interface, with a concomitant reduction to roles which have traditionally seen teachers work largely within the confines of a subject-focussed college setting.

Perceptions of TAFE managers

A major study conducted by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) with TAFE managers is notable for the comments made in relation to the quality of training (Lundberg 1996). From the perspective of the respondents in this study, the training reforms were seen to have had a positive influence on the quality of VET provision. The areas that had been affected positively include:

- the increased portability of qualifications due to the introduction of national curricula;
- the opportunity to develop close links with industry and promote a greater focus on meeting their needs;
- the introduction of CBT and its emphasis on outcomes which leads to greater clarity in determining learning outcomes;
- the opportunity to compete in an open training market; and
- the use of RPL.

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It is interesting to note that in the eyes of both teachers and managers, there is much to be applauded in the training reforms. However, there also appears to be conflicting opinions about other aspects, particularly in relation to those areas of the reform process associated with the introduction of the open training market and the use of national curricula. One explanation for this divergence in perceptions may lie in the fact that changes brought about by these two components of the reform process have resulted in a far greater impact on the role of the teacher than was anticipated.

Other key findings from the NCVER study include:

- Only one-fifth of respondents reported a comprehensive application of the features of CBT within their institute;
- Managers believed that three-fifths of their staff were in need of staff development in a number of key areas relating to the use of CBT. These included the preparation of teaching materials, course presentation, delivery and assessment;
- The introduction of the CBT system had impacted on their management role in a number of ways, including:
    - an increase in demand for the PD of staff;
    - problems in resource planning (including staff, facilities, etc.);
    - increased administration and record keeping, particularly in relation to assessment; and
    - problems in relation to the meaningful reporting of the outcomes of assessments.
- In relation to the introduction of more flexible modes of course delivery, three-quarters of the managers in TAFE reported that less than two-fifths of their courses have been affected by this policy direction. The view that more than three-quarters of staff needed PD in this area was also reported. There is a widespread perception that the current mechanisms for measuring productivity (the number of contact hours) were no longer appropriate, given the increasing push towards a more flexible approach to the delivery of training.
- TAFE managers believed that their institutions played only a small part in delivering the AVTS. Managers reported low levels of involvement in work-based training and in linking with other providers of VET, such as schools and private providers. The admission was made that 'much still needs to be done in this area of reform'.

In contrast to views offered by TAFE teaching staff, this study found that, whilst there was a general acceptance of the new policy environment in relation to the open training market, senior management was more favourable than middle management in TAFE (greater than 70% compared with 54%). The report also identified a number of prerequisites that needed to be met within TAFE if this aspect of the reform was to realise its full potential. These prerequisites included:

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- the need to reduce bureaucracy to enhance responsiveness;
- greater autonomy for individual institutes;
- conditions which allowed TAFE to compete with private providers in a fair and equitable manner;
- the need for quality as well as cost effectiveness to be considered in the tendering process; and
- more resources.

Having explored the perceptions of trainers, teachers, and managers of the training reforms, attention is now paid to the implications for professional development programs for staff within the NVETS.

Implications for PD

The process of reforming Australia's vocational education and training system has been a vast and, at times, difficult undertaking. There have been concerns about the manner in which the change process has been managed. However, the key goal of the reforms—the need for a more flexible, competitive, effective and efficient industry-led training system—has been consistently promoted widely and largely endorsed by the key stakeholders in the VET sector.

Evidence suggests that there is wide support from teachers, trainers and managers for various aspects of the reform agenda. These include the use of RPL, the implementation of flexible modes of delivery, the encouragement of systems to enhance the articulation and portability of qualifications, and the opportunity to better serve the needs of identified client groups (both industries and students). There is also evidence from a variety of sources that some elements of the reforms have been difficult to implement and have not delivered the desired outcomes. Some of these issues have arisen as a product of the implementation process, whilst others may be attributed to a lack of information or opportunity for staff and other interested parties to access relevant and timely PD activities.

Perceptions held by VET teachers, trainers and managers are diverse and often conflicting. They reflect, to a large extent, the diverse and complex nature of the VET sector and the varied pathways that the reform process has taken since its inception. It is also clear from the literature cited in this report that the implementation of the reforms has been uneven across the sector. These factors will have an impact on how new initiatives, such as the *New Apprenticeships System* and the development of training packages, will be received and implemented.

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The Federal government is currently implementing a new national training framework. At its core is the *New Apprenticeships System*. This new training framework has been designed to be less bureaucratic, more accessible and more relevant to the needs of business and industry than the previous system. The system, over time, is intended to lead to the abolition of the traditional, time-served apprenticeship which was overly controlled by industrial relations concerns (Kemp 1996a). It will be targeted specifically to meet the needs of small and medium enterprises and will significantly increase the ability of students to combine vocational training and study at school in Years 11 and 12. The *New Apprenticeships System* builds on the agreements which were implemented as part of the Australian Vocational Training System (AVTS). However, it will introduce greater flexibility, remove unnecessary regulation and move control of key aspects of the training system from providers to end users (Kemp 1996b).

There are five key elements in the *New Apprenticeships System*:

- the simplification of apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements to remove regulatory impediments;
- the development of new apprenticeships and traineeships in non-traditional and developing occupations;
- the development of the training infrastructure to ensure greater flexibility and a common framework for the recognition of all qualifications;
- the acceleration of the development of regional partnerships through the expansion of group training companies and the establishment of new regional and community employment councils; and
- the further development of the school-to-work pathway.

These reforms will attempt to deal with many of the criticisms levelled at current VET arrangements (e.g., the lock-step nature of current competency standards and curriculum development processes and the need for increased participation by industry in decision-making processes related to how training will be provided). These reforms will also further entrench the move away from an institutionalised approach to the provision of VET to an enterprise-based model of training. It can be argued that this move will increase the urgency to address issues raised in this paper.

The literature reveals the experiences of teachers, trainers and managers, alongside those of various stakeholders, and describes the difficulties experienced with implementing the training reforms. This suggests that the development of an enterprise-based model of entry-level vocational education and training requires further significant change for all stakeholders.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises will be expected to take a much greater and more active role in the skill development of workers. The model of training which best fits with the goals of these enterprises emphasises on-the-job skill attainment—characterised as the 'learn as you go approach' (Firebrace 1995). Pre-employment

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training which is delivered via a 'more systematic broader curriculum', will remain important and this will need to be coupled with:

> enhanced and enterprise-specific skill development ... developed at the business end in concert with the small business operator ... [with] the trainer ... increasingly seen as a sort of productivity facilitator (Firebrace 1995).

The development of training packages will require a re-thinking of the manner in which competency standards curriculum and qualifications are linked. There will be an increased demand for facilitators/trainers who are skilled in the processes of assessment in a variety of settings.

Further development of the training market will increase pressure on both public and private training providers to compete with each other. In addition, there will be an increased emphasis on the provision of high quality training products that are customised to meet the needs of enterprises whilst still meeting the requirements of the national recognition framework.

In some cases, these reforms will build upon the strengths of the existing system. There is strong support for aspects of training reforms that seek to enhance greater links with, and relevance to, industry and enterprises. Mechanisms which enhance the articulation and portability of qualifications are also strongly supported. In other instances, some of the issues and concerns raised by trainers, teachers and managers in this paper serve to signpost where PD programs might need to be directed. Specifically, PD will need to focus on:

- facilitating expertise in the use of competency-based assessment methods;
- elucidating the exact requirements of programs to be delivered under a CBT system primarily outside of, but also within, institutionalised settings;
- developing skills and expertise to manage training provision across the industry/enterprise interface within the national recognition framework;
- greater clarity in relation to the roles of TAFE teachers as the move continues from institution to enterprise-based training;
- how CBT can be applied across a range of program areas and disciplines, taking into account issues such as the attainment of effective levels of skills and student motivation;
- mechanisms such as Return to Industry schemes or the provision of fee-for-service courses to build institution-based providers' understanding and experience of industry and enterprise training needs;
- skills and knowledge to cope with the demands of fee-for-service work;
- enhanced skills in the use of flexible modes of delivery; and
- increased knowledge and practical skills in competitive tendering processes.

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However, the provision of further PD initiatives needs to be viewed in context with strategies which have been implemented up to this point. Robinson noted that teachers viewed their experiences of PD as 'helpful', but not practically orientated enough to meet their specific needs (Robinson 1993). Teachers and trainers have also expressed doubt about the ability of 'train-the-trainer' type programs to bring about the required changes in attitudes and practices. Instead, they suggest that action-research-based models of PD may be more appropriate (Harris 1993).

In addition to these more practical aspects of PD, there has also emerged the need for strategies to address the requirements of teachers, trainers and managers in relation to assisting them to cope with the changes to their role in an increasingly diverse and competitive market. It is also important to create opportunities for a focus on the current pedagogical debates, such as the ability of a CBT system to deliver the required outcomes in terms of increased skills for workers. To many taking part in the delivery of programs, these debates are crucial to their work within the VET sector, and staff involved require guidance and support.

It also needs to be acknowledged that PD strategies can perhaps only go part of the way to addressing some of the issues raised in this paper. Teachers, trainers and managers have also constantly referred to structural inadequacies as key factors in shaping their perception of the training reforms. These include the manner in which teachers' work is measured in relation to productivity, the use of overly bureaucratic and top-down management approaches, a lack of information, the pace of change and the lack of truly collaborative decision-making. Private providers stress the need for mechanisms which ensure equal access to information on training reforms and the need to monitor competitive tendering processes so that the true costs of providing training are reflected in tenders.

The VET sector has undergone considerable change in the past 7–8 years. Many staff are 'change weary' and the prospect of further substantial change as the new National Training Framework is implemented could be viewed in a less than positive manner. It is imperative that the new policy directions, such as the *New Apprenticeships System*, be promoted as building on the reforms that have already been implemented. Success in implementing new initiatives, such as training packages and new apprenticeships will depend on the ability of change agents to 'win the hearts and minds' of staff within the VET sector. However, careful attention is also needed to ensure that the issues and difficulties that have already emerged are dealt with effectively and efficiently. In this manner, the change process can be managed so that it can enhance and support the healthy development and growth of the VET sector in Australia.

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Summary of professional development issues emerging from recent reviews and reports

ROGER MATHERS, MICHELE SIMONS, KATE PERKINS AND HUGH GUTHRIE

Background

Australian National Training Authority has contracted National Centre for Vocational Education Research to undertake a series of evaluations of professional development (PD) issues concerning the national vocational education and training (VET) system.

In order to provide guidance to future PD initiatives and programs in support of the National Training Framework (NTF), the project reference committee supported an initial evaluation project to gather information about:

- issues and developments relating to recent PD initiatives, and
- the perceptions of VET staff required to implement training reforms.

This provides a level of information about current PD issues that will help define subsequent work to be undertaken in this project. The further work envisaged is a brief skills analysis and analysis of trends in employment and qualifications, across the VET sectors and systems, and an analysis of the strategic use of PD by managers in achieving their business objectives.

While this evaluative information is based on recent national training policies, it is argued that the NTF builds on and expands earlier experiences. Thus, skills, knowledge and perceptions currently held within VET will, to a large degree, be relevant to contemporary developments.

The three reviews

Three related reviews were undertaken during November and December 1996. They involved a review and analysis of over 65 recent evaluations, reports and papers, leading to a summary of issues and the sign-posting of areas which needed improvement. Many of the issues are systemic and long term in nature, requiring continued attention within the development of NTF. The available reports are:

- lessons learnt from the planning and provision of PD for VET teachers, trainers and managers; drawing on national and State reviews of PD, including Australian Vocational Training System (AVTS) PD, National Transition Program (NTP)

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PD and evaluation of national PD products and programs developed by the previous National Staff Development Committee (NSDC);

- perceptions of VET teachers, trainers and managers to the national training reforms; drawing on State and national reports and research findings concerned with the perceptions of staff towards training reforms and their views on current skills in terms of the NTF requirements; and
- professional preparation and on-going development of TAFE staff; drawing on major reviews of TAFE teacher education in recent years.

Below is a brief summary of the main issues concerning the delivery of recent PD programs and the perceptions of VET staff towards the various training reforms. This is followed by a paper summarising the evaluation findings from the reports. In these two papers, specific proposals for action are highlighted. Issues that emerged from the consideration of the professional preparation of TAFE staff have also been included in the summary. The summary papers are not referenced.

Issues emerging from recent evaluations of PD

PD as a strategy for change

PD is not yet sufficiently appreciated, planned or implemented as a strategic activity. Programs linked to VET priorities and goals and aimed at organisational development are more effective than offering discrete PD training programs to individuals who volunteer to attend.

The diversity of groups developing policy and their respective responsibilities may prevent policy implementation and its associated PD being handled in a comprehensive way.

The support of senior management is a critical factor in the provision of effective PD, leading to the achievement of organisational change. Managers, particularly those in TAFE, need a better understanding of change management process, including the role of PD in organisational development.

The effectiveness of the PD coordinator/manager is a critical success factor. This role needs to be defined and developed. Such staff require skills in strategic project management and leadership, and in the design, development, organisation and evaluation of PD programs.

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Successful PD methodologies

There is real potential to use PD programs to model best practice in terms of action-learning (AL), work-based, and self-paced learning. These programs can also take into account learners' needs and adapt to local requirements. However, the evaluations revealed that much of the delivery was conventional. PD approaches that adopted learner-centred approaches, in particular AL, had a greater impact on organisational change and participant development.

While it is most desirable to further the use of more innovative delivery methods, having skilled facilitators is an essential factor. The evaluations indicated a critical shortage of expert facilitators. Provision of quality facilitation is an important requirement for successful PD. It is a highly skilled task, and facilitators require adequate PD.

Targeting of participants

Selecting participants for programs is, potentially, a strategic decision, but in many instances it does not appear to have been treated as such.

Selection criteria need to be more tightly defined and linked to the objects of the PD program.

PD has been largely directed at front-line practitioners in TAFE and industry. The strategic planning of PD programs needs to include PD project coordinators, facilitators and managers.

Reporting and evaluation

Evaluation is an issue at all levels of the PD process: system, program, project and individual participant. Most evaluations were designed to satisfy funding requirements, rather than as a basis for program improvement. In addition to the need for improved evaluation guidelines, PD program and project managers require skills in evaluation concepts and techniques.

The analysis of the State and Territory PD programs covered in this review provides an opportunity to develop a checklist of practical do's and don'ts for PD managers and facilitators.

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Issues emerging from analysis of the perceptions of VET staff to recent training reforms

Managers and managing the change process

The review of the material on the perceptions of VET staff, particularly those in TAFE, clearly shows that the management of the change process has been problematic. In addition, the impact of the reforms has been patchy. While there is relatively strong support for reforms leading to benefits for trainees, other aspects such as the open training market have limited support.

A critical issue for staff is the insufficient opportunity to contribute to the change process or openly debate and discuss aspects which impact significantly on their work in areas (e.g. assessment). Changes to their roles and the pace and diversity of change have left many staff lacking confidence and with a deep resistance to change.

The review highlighted the critical role of managers in managing the process of change, including an understanding of those staff who are affected by the changes. The review highlighted the need for managers in TAFE to adopt a more strategic approach to managing change, in particular the ways of supporting and involving staff, including the identification of their PD needs. Managers need skills and training in these areas.

Assessment policies and methods

A primary, continuing and wide-spread concern for TAFE teachers and managers relates to competency-based assessment. Interpreting competency standards. The meaning of minimum standards, non-graded assessment and the assessment workload are among their on-going concerns. There is an urgent need to clarify policies in the area of assessment and to give guidance and training to staff.

Impact of recent training reforms

There is a strong feeling within TAFE that the teachers and trainers have been perceived as inflexible and slow to change, and have therefore been by-passed in many of the recent innovations in workplace training delivery.

In many well-established areas of training in TAFE, including apprenticeships and traineeships, there is a reluctance in some quarters to share training and assessment with industry. Both managers and staff need encouragement to develop cooperative and shared training arrangements with industry and schools.

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Changing role and skills of teachers and managers

The reviews revealed that the on-going program of training reform over several years has had a major impact on the role of teachers and managers, perhaps more than was originally envisaged. However, there are no agreed professional standards to guide the PD of staff as yet.

There appears to be a core of staff that are viewed by senior management as unable to adapt to changing requirements. There is also a trend from permanent to contract employment, which has implications for the approaches used to PD. In addition, little attention has been paid to the PD of part-time, contract and casual staff, although their role in delivery is significant.

While there is much support for the elements of the training reform program, teachers are concerned about the open training markets and their ability and confidence to compete.

PD implications of the findings

The most obvious aspects of PD that stand out as being in need of attention are:

- the use of competency-based assessment methods;
- the specific competency requirements of programs to be delivered under a CBT system;
- management issues;
- how CBT can be applied across a range of program areas and disciplines;
- skills and knowledge to deal with the demands of fee-for-service work;
- flexible modes of training and delivery;
- competitive tendering; and
- cooperative training and assessment arrangements with industry and schools.

Issues emerging from analysis of TAFE teacher preparation and development

Industrial relations agreements involving approaches to teaching terms and conditions and methods, can seriously affect the nature and effectiveness of ways in which individuals and organisations within the TAFE sector work. Industrial relations practices can actively encourage or effectively prevent good PD.

Performance measures for individuals and organisations and their weighting can likewise affect human resource management practices.

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There is a decreasing concern with credentials for TAFE teachers and an increasing concern with the performance of individuals and teams which can be actively supported through ongoing and planned PD. Responsibility for this PD often lies with at a local level. Little is known about effectiveness and flow on effect of PD at a local level, although anecdotally it appears to be generally poorly managed; however, AL approaches appear to have been particularly effective.

The delivery of PD needs to be flexible, encouraging a reflective approach to practice. There is a need to ensure that institutions awarding qualifications give due recognition to valuable PD which falls outside formal frameworks.

Appendices

Summaries of:

- Lessons learnt: An analysis of findings of recent evaluation reports on PD in vocational education and training
- Perceptions of vocational education and training staff towards recent national training reforms
- Summary of lessons learnt: An analysis of findings of recent evaluation reports on PD in VET

Introduction

The review of more than 30 evaluations and reports on recent State/Territory and national PD initiatives in support of training reforms has revealed a mixed performance. There are pockets of well-planned and effectively delivered and evaluated PD. In general, there is room for much improvement, suggestions for which have been highlighted in these papers.

PD as a strategy for change

PD is not yet sufficiently appreciated, planned or implemented as a strategic activity.

National and State level PD programs, such as AVTS PD, CBT in Action and the NTP, are usually funded and structured to emphasise the differences between them rather than to exploit the synergies, and they operate largely independently of each other unless specific intervention occurs at the State level. This seldom occurred.

Only programs such as AVTS have developed strategic plans that took into account a range of factors external to the program, such as a State's strategic needs, specific

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industry needs and regional issues. This led to the targeting of specific groups for involvement in PD and influenced the design of programs customised for them—a crucial factor for success. However, there was an impression that most programs operate on a more *ad hoc* level.

Individual projects also need to adopt a strategic approach. Projects were more successful when a PD program provided strategic benefit to the enterprise and benefit to individual participants.

A key factor in industry-based PD success was the role played by PD project managers in winning top management support and providing a service rather than 'training' or 'professional development'. In both TAFE and industry settings, many project managers focussed all their attention on establishing and maintaining PD activities, but as the program progressed found that a lack of understanding and little support for participants by an enterprise could undermine the process considerably.

Effective leadership and management support

The lack of strategic appreciation of PD has contributed to its widespread treatment as peripheral to core activities in many TAFE institutes and private enterprises. Much of PD was not considered part of normal work but, rather, as competing with it. Many organisations made it clear that PD is not valued, with managers and supervisors not supporting their staff in their development needs. PD remains largely an individual concern.

Programs utilising AL established effective mechanisms to share learning across the organisation. However, in other cases, including Return to Industry (RTI) programs, there appears to have been little or no organisational impact. Some participants in the RTI program felt that their career had suffered through their participation.

The quality of PD program and project leadership, combined with the need for a broad role definition of a PD manager as a coordinator rather than simply an administrator, emerged as a key factor in overall success. The degree of support from managers (in both TAFE and industry) was also seen as important. Attempts to gain management support were generally well worth the effort in terms of outcomes and impact on future PD activities.

Expertise of the PD facilitator

All evaluations of PD highlighted the critical importance of high quality facilitation. Facilitators must be experts, with a breadth of experience and knowledge covering educational processes, technical areas, specific industry knowledge and change

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management issues. They must be able to model the practices they are espousing or people may become cynical. They also must be flexible and client-orientated.

Evaluations revealed many instances of high quality facilitation, but also exposed others where participants felt that facilitators were not well-organised, experienced or responsive. Some programs noted difficulty in finding appropriate personnel. Few facilitators had been allocated funds for their own PD.

Successful PD methodologies

There is real potential for the use of PD programs as models of best practice in terms of AL, work-based, and self-paced education and training. It can also be used to take into account learners' needs and as a means of adapting to local requirements.

Only a few programs have risen to the challenge. Face-to-face approaches were by far the most prevalent employed in past PD programs. However, there was clear evidence that those who practiced the concepts and methodologies supported by the NTF were more likely to be successful, if success is measured in terms of long-term changes in attitudes and behaviour.

There is a place for more traditional awareness-raising seminars, but they must be carefully timed and designed to inspire participants to move onto more practical work-related activities.

The evaluations highlighted the need for facilitators to have appropriate skills and experience before embarking on more innovative delivery. They also revealed that there is a shortage of such skilled facilitators.

Targeting of participants

Selecting participants for programs is potentially a strategic decision, but appears not to have been treated as such. Evaluations usually described the process used, but its relationship to broader objectives and specific selection criteria was not seen as particularly important.

Almost all PD has been aimed at front line practitioners, mostly from TAFE but increasingly from industry-based trainers. When designing programs it is important to perceive these two groups as distinct entities with different backgrounds, experience, pressures and needs. However, many of their PD concerns were similar and both responded positively to work-based practical PD negotiated to suit their own situations.

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Based on the evaluation considered, it appears there has been little or no PD delivered to other areas of VET, such as private providers, community organisations/providers, ITABs and schools.

Furthermore, there has been little focus on the PD for non-practitioners, yet they are critical of the success of PD generally. The review highlighted the importance of effective strategic project and program management, the lack of skilled facilitators, the lack of appreciation of PD by senior management and their role in the potential success of any PD venture.

Reporting and evaluation of PD

Evaluation is an issue at all levels of the PD process: system, program, project and individual participant. System requirements for reporting and evaluation need attention paid to a more general strategic approach. External evaluators commented on the limitation of post-program studies, lack of evaluation guidelines and lapse of time between program completion and evaluation. Evaluation criteria must be closely tied to specific outcomes, with rigorous processes built in from the earliest stages. This not only ensures accountability, but also facilitates the learning process.

Although there was an identified need for formal standardised guidelines to assist the evaluation process, the real need may be for training program and project managers in evaluation concepts and techniques. Many programs were not designed with on-going monitoring and evaluation as an integral part of the process. They used inadequate post-program evaluation methods which appeared to yield the required results (e.g. 'Outcomes achieved ... Outcomes achieved ... Outcomes achieved ... the projects reported') was typical of project reporting. However, these reports provide little indication of what really happened, how the outcomes were deemed to have been reached or how improvements could be made to future programs.

An evaluation approach concerned with both program improvement and financial accountability would assist PD managers in being more open about their experiences, including the failures.

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Summary of perceptions of VET staff towards recent national training reforms

Introduction

While the findings of recent reviews and reports are based on earlier national training policies and frameworks, the attitudes and perceptions developed during that period will impact on the progress of developments under the NTF. The findings strongly indicate that there are several areas in which problems continue to exist, including resistance to change, which will continue to require the attention of policy-makers and managers.

All the reviews concerning perceptions of TAFE staff raise concerns about their lack of involvement, limited information, lack of support from management, and the impact of many aspects of the reforms on both trainees and their duties. This, together with organisational restructuring and budget reductions, has developed a lack of confidence and a deep resistance to change in many quarters of TAFE.

The review considered all recent material on the perceptions of VET staff towards training reforms. The bulk of these concerned the views of TAFE staff, with some attention being given to industry managers and trainers. There has been little research into the perceptions of staff from other sectors of VET.

Implementation of training reforms, in particular CBT

The taking up of training reforms within TAFE, particularly CBT, has varied in scope and pace. There is considerable debate about the nature of CBT and its essential and desirable features. The weight of evidence suggests that CBT has been implemented in varying ways with varying degrees of success and that implementation targets are well below those set by VEETAC.

One recent national survey stated that only one-fifth of TAFE managers reported a comprehensive application of the features of CBT within their institute. Furthermore, this survey highlighted that a large majority of managers reported less than two-fifths of their courses being affected by the policy of flexible delivery.

This mixed performance together with deep-seated resistance within some quarters of TAFE, has created negative perceptions by sections of the industry towards TAFE.

In addition to the debate about the availability of CBT within TAFE, there is considerable evidence that many people within industry are not aware of what CBT is. One national survey reported 73% of respondents had never heard of CBT and 72% were unaware of competency standards.

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Perspectives of teachers

Strong evidence suggests that there is support from teachers, trainers and managers in the VET system towards various aspects of CBT. Some aspects are well-supported, but others are not. Reports showed that teachers were 'not negative to change', but were negative about the perceived lack of support given to them as they worked through the change process.

The aspects of the training reform supported by teachers include RPL, flexible delivery modes, articulation, portability, opportunities to better serve industry, and clearer specifications of what the outcomes of VET should be. Most of these have a strong student or trainee perspective and are seen to enhance the quality of education and training operating within TAFE institutes. From the teachers' perspective, these developments were in place prior to the reform process.

For many years, teachers have had concerns regarding the assessment and management of CBT. These issues continue to be hotly debated and remain unresolved for many teachers. Also of importance are the difficulties of teachers in non-metropolitan areas, who suffer from isolation and lack of access to resources. In addition, fears exist that moves towards a more market-driven VET system would impact negatively on TAFE's responsibilities to disadvantaged groups.

Moves to a national system for the development of curricula have not been received favourably by teachers. The lack of opportunities to participate in national curriculum projects has often led to teachers feeling frustrated. They were assumed to be merely consumers of a product, which they formerly would have had a role in developing. This fragmentation and separation of the roles of curriculum developer and implementer has, in many cases, led to a sense of frustration and annoyance in teachers, particularly if the products of the curriculum are seen to be flawed in any case.

Assessment policies and methods of CBT

In the area of competency-based assessment (CBA) concerns include:

- interpretation of competency standards and the meaning of minimum standards;
- assessing subjects that are largely theoretically based;
- CBT best suited to courses with a highly practical component;
- use of non-graded assessment, and its impact on student motivation;
- number of re-tests and the development of re-test instruments;
- challenges to judgements by teachers of trainee performance;
- emphasis on assessment and reduced time and effort on facilitation, including trainees needing additional help;

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- increased workload in relation to assessment and recording, including RPL; and
- perceived lower skill levels demonstrated by trainees.

Management of the change process

Reports have shown that teachers were 'not negative to change', but negative about the perceived lack of support given to them as they worked through the change process. Adequate support for teachers in responding to the new demands of the open training market and recent changes to entry-level training are critical issues. They have again highlighted the importance of managing change and supporting staff who are expected to deliver work-based, customised and cooperative training programs with industry and schools.

How the change process has been managed to introduce these various training reforms is of great concern to TAFE teachers. Lack of resources, limited information, confusion and uncertainty about the changes, pace and volume of change, issues associated with assessment, limited PD, and increased workloads have lead to low staff morale and increased stress.

The reports have indicated that there is much to be applauded in the training reforms. However, it appears that over several years the reform process has resulted in a far greater impact on the role of the teacher than perhaps was anticipated.

A survey concerning the impact on TAFE managers highlighted impacts on their role including:

- the increase in demand for PD of staff;
- problems in resource planning;
- increased administration and record keeping, particularly in relation to assessment;
- problems in relation to the meaningful reporting of assessment outcomes; and
- inadequate measures of reporting productivity working against the introduction of flexible delivery.

The change management process of training reforms has been problematic for TAFE teachers.

Impact of recent training reforms on TAFE

A recent national survey of TAFE managers found that TAFE played a small part in the development and delivery of work-based training and cooperative programs with schools and industry under the AVTS. There is a strong perception that TAFE has been by-passed in these recent national training initiatives.

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A recently completed NCVER review of the integration of on- and off-the-job training has highlighted the reluctance in many quarters of TAFE to share in the delivery and assessment of traditional apprenticeship and traineeship programs. Perceptions of being under threat, under-valued and by-passed in the training reforms appear to run deep. This is working against the call for increased training cooperation by TAFE with industry and schools.

Many teachers view the open training market as an unnecessary part of the reform process. It undermines current training arrangements, including cooperative arrangements with industry which have taken many years to establish. In contrast, about three-quarters of TAFE's senior management were supportive, yet only half of middle managers favoured the level-playing field.

The changing role of TAFE teachers and managers

A theme to emerge strongly from the evaluations of the TAFE system and the changing nature of the VET sector is the role of the TAFE teacher and the impact of these reforms on that role. An understanding of this changed role is important when considering the PD implications for TAFE teachers.

There is a strong notion that teachers have become recipients of change rather than participants in the change process. In exploring reasons for the variable pace of change within the VET system, it has been noted that some teachers may perceive recent reforms as distracting them from what they believe to be their primary role—working in classrooms to educate people for a particular industry. The reforms imply the need for a shift in focus from student needs to industry needs—a move that is not viewed favourably by some TAFE teachers. Teachers were perceived to be negative towards changes in the reform process that took them away from the classroom. Reports suggest that this is the site from which the teacher gains the most intrinsic rewards, and the work that originally attracted them to move from industry to TAFE. It appears that many middle managers have similar perspectives to teachers and are 'caught' between national policy directions and their traditional teaching responsibilities. There is clear evidence that the level of industrial experience is also an important factor in how people view training reforms. The longer the time since a teacher was in industry, the less the teacher seemed able to relate to the training reforms.

It appears that for many TAFE teachers, their department and institution, including middle and senior management, have not provided sufficient leadership and support or assist them through the change process. A common view now held among many human resource managers in TAFE is that there is now a 'too hard' category of some teachers and managers, who are seen as unable to change in relation to the NTF requirements.

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Changing skills of the TAFE teacher and manager

A State-based review completed in 1996 asked TAFE teachers to rate their level of knowledge, understanding and abilities on several aspects of training reform. The areas where they achieved low ratings included policy areas, such as National Framework for Recognition of Training and RPL, as well as skill areas of CBT and assessment, and the preparation of training resources.

In another State survey, TAFE teachers were concerned about their lack of industry skills and industry knowledge.

Managers of TAFE institutes reported in a national study that three-fifths of their staff were in need of staff development in a number of key areas relating to the use of CBT. These included the preparation of training materials, course presentation, and assessment.

There is a degree of consensus in the various reports that the future role of TAFE teachers, or at least for many TAFE teachers, will be to take on the role of a training consultant; one who will be able to:

- discuss, advise and develop training plans;
- communicate with a wide range of employers;
- problem solve;
- facilitate partnerships with employers;
- have a detailed knowledge of industry culture; and
- carry well-developed workplace assessor skills.

Implications for PD

In addition, the review of reports and evaluations highlight the importance of:

- practically orientated PD, focussed on the specific needs of teachers;
- strategies to help them cope with the changes to their role in an increasingly diverse and competitive market; and
- opportunities for discussion on the current training issues.

Furthermore, the reviews have constantly referred to the structural inadequacies that have shaped the perception of teachers and managers towards training reforms, namely:

- the manner in which teacher's work is measured in relation to productivity;
- the use of overly bureaucratic and top-down management approaches;
- a lack of information; and
- a lack of truly collaborative decision-making.

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Trends in employment, skill and qualification requirements of training staff

ROGER MATHERS

Introduction

Background

This research into professional development (PD) in the VET sector is based on the recognition that the range of VET providers has expanded considerably in recent years. There have also been changes to the nature, background and composition of the VET workforce that develops, delivers and assesses training. The availability of competent training staff, whether permanent, contract or casual, is a key factor in the provision of quality training services in a competitive training market.

The key research question is 'what are the trends in employment, skill and qualification requirements, and professional development of staff employed by VET providers?'

The research aimed to identify these trends occurring across sectors of vocational education and training in all States/Territories. It also sought to advise State/Territory and national VET managers on the implications for PD policy and programs.

A related Australian National Training Authority project on teacher employment contracts and educational outcomes is being undertaken by the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training (ACIRRT) at Sydney University. This project considers in detail the employment and industrial agreements applying within the various sectors of VET and the State systems. The research reported here does not attempt to duplicate the work of ACIRRT, but rather to complement it by focussing on PD aspects associated with trends in employment and skill requirements.

Research methodology

The research involved consultations with managers who have responsibilities or interests in PD or human resource management within training authorities, associations or bodies associated with the following sectors of VET:

- TAFE;
- SkillShare;
- private providers;

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- adult and community education;
- schools; and
- enterprises.

In addition, consultations were held with universities active in the development of VET staff, accreditation and recognition authorities and the Assessor and Workplace Trainer Competency Standards Body (CSB).

Appendix A provides the names and organisations of the individuals consulted. An interview schedule (Appendix B) was developed to collect data from the managers consulted. Initial contact was made to explain the project and the interview schedule was sent by facsimile to the manager in advance of a telephone interview. A detailed content analysis was made of the notes taken and is presented here.

It should be noted that the managers consulted were giving their ideas and perceptions about employment and PD matters. These were based on internal consultations regarding policies and practices operating within their organisation, as well as their professional judgement on issues. The number of people interviewed in each sector was limited, therefore, some care should be taken in generalising the results.

Employment trends

Terminology

Across the VET sectors, and State and Territory systems, different job titles are used for similar staff functions and positions associated with teaching, training and assessment. In this report, three employment categories are used: permanent, contract and casual. Permanent refers to staff in on-going or permanent employment. Contract staff refers to fixed-term or limited-tenure positions (e.g. 6-month to 3-year contracts). Casual staff refers to those appointed on an hourly or sessional basis, generally only for the period of the course they are teaching. In TAFE NSW, it should be noted that contract positions are not used and casual staff are considered part-time.

In this section, the current employment profiles and trends operating within each of the sectors are considered.

TAFE

While there are some significant differences in the employment policies operating in the States and Territories, there has been a clear move to reduce the size of the permanent workforce and increase contract and casual employment. In most systems

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and providers, few permanent appointments are now being made. When permanent positions become available, they are often replaced by contract or casual positions.

TAFE staffing information for 1995 shows a considerable reliance on casual and contract staff for training delivery. For example, 58% of teaching hours were provided by full-time staff and 42% by part-time staff. In some States, part-time staff delivered more teaching hours than full-time staff (Australian Committee on Vocational Education and Tranining Statistics 1996).

As part of this research, consultations with managers indicated that between 40 and 60% of the teaching staff in terms of full-time equivalents were permanent. For example, in Victoria during 1996, 54% of TAFE teachers are permanent, 33% were contract and 13% were casual (equivalent full-time positions). However, in terms of individuals, 36% were permanent, 29% were contract and 35% were casual (Office of Training and Further Education 1997).

Fooks *et al.* point out several characteristics of TAFE in comparison to other VET providers (Fooks *et al.* 1997):

- TAFE institutions are usually large and comprehensive in terms of the level and range of their educational offerings, including remedial and advanced-level programs;
- TAFE is predominantly an institution-based operation, in contrast to an on-the-job training approach. It caters for full-time students and provides a range of student support services; and
- TAFE emphasises vocational education, often combining education and training with an emphasis on skills which are applicable industry wide.

These characteristics generate a demand for a complement of full-time professional teaching staff to manage and provide a diverse range of vocational education offerings.

While the move towards a market environment has led to increased staffing flexibility through greater use of casual staff in the TAFE teaching force, systems are cautious about quantifying further change. It is understood that unions are concerned about the increasing use of contract and casual staff. However, in order to ensure quality teaching as an aspect of competitive advantage, systems in general recognise the need to maintain an appropriate balance between permanent and casual staffing. Several systems are interested in increasing the number of permanent staff where there is a demonstrated on-going need.

While the characteristics of TAFE create a need for on-going staff, the relatively high cost of its training delivery makes it difficult to compete in the open training market. Ryan estimates the annual all-up cost for an employer of a TAFE teacher to be about $82 000, while for an up-to-date trade trainer, about $50 000 (Ryan 1996). Furthermore, the 1995 TAFE staffing figures show that for full-time teachers, 46% of

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total duty hours is spent on teaching, while for part-time teaching staff total duty the figure is 93%.

Fooks *et al.* call for a comprehensive review of staffing arrangements for a modern TAFE sector operating in a competitive training market (Fooks *et al.* 1997), in particular:

- a multi-skilled fully trained professional who might specialise in teaching, in developing curriculum and learning materials or industry liaison;
- new categories of support teaching, tutoring and training staff; and
- technical support.

In several systems, an 'assistant' teaching position has been introduced to provide a range of teaching and support services at a lower rate of salary than that of a TAFE teacher or lecturer. Different job titles are used for these positions (e.g., lecturer assistant or tutor). These positions have been in place for several years in Queensland and South Australia and are currently being trialled at Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). It appears that the acceptance or appropriateness of such positions has varied between study areas in TAFE.

Over recent years, there have been a number of employment trends common to most TAFE systems:

- Contract positions—A significant increase in the number of contract positions. For most systems, this has been the area of greatest change in the employment profile. In areas of on-going need, contract appointments are often extended.

- Casual positions—Casual staff have long been a major contributor to delivery in TAFE. Their contribution to the teaching effort has increased in recent years and is likely to expand further.

- Permanent positions—Permanent staffing, for a long time a feature of TAFE employment, has reduced as a proportion of overall teaching resources and in some systems is likely to decrease further.

- 'Assistant' or tutor positions—Several systems have introduced such positions in recent years as a way of providing more cost-efficient teaching services in areas which are considered suitable.

SkillShare

The SkillShare program is undergoing major restructuring. Many programs are winding down following changes in the Commonwealth Government's policies associated with labour market programs and the establishment of employment placement enterprises. Three years ago, SkillShare associations employed some 6000

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staff, with about 90% of these in on-going permanent positions. Programs of an on-going nature tended to be staffed by permanent positions. Now, less than 10% of the workforce is permanent, with the remainder being contract and casual.

Managers of SkillShare centres have generally been recruited from the schools sector and come with educational qualifications. There are three main categories of staff involved in training. These categories are: training and development coordinators (who spend about 50% of their time training), training and development officers (about 70%), and trainers and sessional staff (who spend nearly all their time delivering training).

While the impact of the competitive training market has yet to take full effect, the move towards an increase in the use of casual staff is expected in the pursuit of reducing the fixed costs of training. However, a core of permanent staff is expected to be maintained.

Adult and community education

The adult and community education sector (ACE) has enjoyed major growth over the past 10 years in both informal education and, more recently, in VET and other vocational programs.

The sector is diverse, ranging from large centres in metropolitan and major country cities to small centres in rural areas. Common to all, however, is the almost exclusive use of sessional staff, frequently called tutors, for program delivery. In a large centre, there are typically two to three on-going staff, often called program coordinators; administrative staff who handle enrolments; and between 100 and 300 sessional teaching staff. ACE providers have minimal on-going staffing and are highly flexible in terms of delivery staff. Sessional staff are employed for the particular program they deliver. In areas of high demand, such as computing, a tutor may build up several classes at the one centre. A developing trend is for a trainer to provide classes to several providers, frequently operating as a proprietary company and negotiating and invoicing the provider for education and training services.

For the small complement of permanent program coordinators, the selection and appraisal of the large group of sessional staff is a major part of their responsibilities.

Since the early 1990s, the VET component has grown significantly and is expected to continue in the context of the competitive training market. Much of the VET program has been in the generic, business and management areas. Activity in labour market programs, established in recent years, has been reduced as a result of the recent Commonwealth Government policy changes. In New South Wales, there is a strong involvement in language and literacy programs. These provide for the on-going

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appointment of coordinators and staff, who are able to participate in State-wide networks, including PD.

There is interest within ACE regarding an increased complement of on-going staff. However, the lack of a secure financial base makes it difficult for this to be achieved. On-going staffing would enable ACE providers to increase their business, including the preparation of tenders. In larger centres, the opportunity to create a core group of staff through full-time or part-time contracts is greater.

Many ACE providers, who are well-established in VET provision, are keen to expand into the emerging training opportunities flowing from the National Training Framework (NTF) and the New Apprenticeships. To date, the majority of their VET provision has been institution-based. ACE providers need the capacity to develop and market new training services, competency-based training, the assessment including RPL and the establishment of strategic partnerships with industry. Managers and coordinators need to understand and incorporate new training agendas, competency standards and a stronger industry focus.

ACE providers possess flexibility and strong links with the community, which are assets in the development of new training services. However, there is a need for additional skills to address the competitive training market and provide services to industry. The minimal permanent staffing infrastructure of ACE presents both strengths and weaknesses in the future development of their VET provision.

Private providers

The private provider sector is diverse and includes smaller niche-market providers and larger colleges covering a wide range of programs, some of which operate in several States. While variations are expected in the nature of employment between providers, there appear to be some common trends operating.

For many of the established business colleges there have been significant changes to the nature of their provision and the composition of their student population. For example, these colleges enjoyed a strong demand for full-time programs. Employment of teaching staff was largely full-time and permanent. However, there are now many other providers operating including TAFE, schools and, more recently established private providers. Students are now also part-time, mature aged, and from a wider range of social and cultural backgrounds. Increasingly, there is a move away from institution-based programs, including the more recent on-the-job traineeships. With an increasingly competitive training market, business colleges are finding that their program is now more diverse and less certain in terms of student demand. As a result, employment for such providers is increasingly on a contract and casual basis, enabling them to respond to changing market situations.

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However, some providers who have been operating with a largely casual workforce appear to be interested in slightly increasing their complement of permanent or contract positions. This is seen as a means of strengthening the quality of their overall provision, in some cases reducing staff costs, as well as enabling the providers to expand their business.

Furthermore, there is an evident increase in the number of independent trainers operating as proprietary companies. These trainers are contracted by private providers for the provision of teaching and training services.

Schools

The Commonwealth Government is encouraging schools to expand and strengthen their choice of vocational options , so that students have the option of leaving with a recognised vocational qualification. In 1996, 62% of schools offered vocational education programs (Australian Student Traineeship Foundation 1996). However, these were not necessarily VET-accredited programs. For example, currently 12% of students in Tasmania are undertaking certificate level 1 programs with an on-the-job training component of up to 240 hours.

While the focus is on level 1 programs, some schools are providing levels 2 and 3 programs through cooperative arrangements with enterprises, group training companies, TAFE and other registered training providers. For example, a highschool in the Gladstone area of Queensland provides a metal fabrication apprenticeship for years 11 and 12 students. This is equivalent to the first year apprenticeship including 16 weeks of on-the-job training. The trade-specific content is provided by TAFE and the generic content by the school. In Tasmania, a level 2 traineeship in printing involves Claremont College providing most off-the-job training, with some offered by TAFE. On-the-job training is provided by employers.

The vocational programs in schools are organised by coordinators who come from various backgrounds. These coordinators are mainly teachers from schools with interests in vocational education, such as home economics, commercial studies or career education. However, some have been recruited from industry. The teachers of vocational education are usually full-time schoolteachers. Generally, they volunteer to undertake additional training so that they can deliver the VET program as well as continuing to provide their general education courses. In New South Wales, there are plans to trial the use of individuals with current or recent industry experience in the delivery of VET programs in schools.

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Enterprises

There are several trends operating in the delivery of training within enterprises. In terms of the organisation of training, there is a move away from central training centres to the delivery of training at the place of production, using front-line technology and operations staff. This approach is considered more effective and efficient because it uses current technology and procedures and employs staff with dual roles of productive work and training. In addition, training is increasingly being delivered with the support of technology. Generic training, such as occupational health and safety, and leadership training, is being outsourced to private trainers, training providers or consultants. There is also a limited trend to outsource some company-specific training to niche-market trainers.

As a consequence, the 'professional' training manager or officer manages the training function—including the supervision of internal trainers and contract trainers—instead of the delivery of training. Increasingly, such positions provide the link between company objectives, human resource development, and skills formation and training.

Summary

The employment profiles vary between the various sectors of VET. For providers with strong government-funding support—including TAFE, schools and SkillShare—permanent staffing has been the primary means of program delivery. For TAFE and SkillShare in particular, there has been a strong move to reduce the component of permanent staffing. For VET in schools, there is an increased use of industry people in program coordination and delivery, and collaborative arrangements with enterprises and other providers.

For ACE and private providers, staff are predominantly contract or casual, with a small component of permanent program coordinators. In some quarters, there is an interest in marginally increasing their core group of on-going staff. However, the delivery will continue to be provided predominantly by casual and contract staff with current or recent industry experience.

Within enterprises, training is increasingly being provided by 'part-time' operational staff for whom training is a part of their responsibilities, and by outside contractors, consultants and providers. The overall training function, particularly in larger enterprises, is managed by training and development 'professionals', with training being delivered by contract and casual staff from both within and outwith the organisation.

While TAFE has become more flexible in the use of its staff resources, it continues to have the largest component of permanent training staff within the post-school sectors of VET.

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A further characteristic or trend evident across most sectors is a separation between the management and delivery of training. Program coordinators or training managers have responsibilities for program planning, designing and evaluation, and the selection, supervision and appraisal of casual and contract staff. These professionals operate over a range of skill and industry areas, and provide the link between corporate objectives and skill formation. The maintenance of industry technical competence is not relevant to those positions; that is the responsibility of training staff who are expected or required to have current industrial experience and knowledge.

This separation of training management and training delivery has implications for required skills and qualifications, which is considered in the next section.

Skill and qualification trends

In this section, the skills and qualifications required by permanent, contract and casual staff—whether under industrial agreements or by recognition bodies—are considered for each VET sector. The need for training credentials associated with achieving assessor and workplace trainer competencies, specified by State/Territory recognition bodies, has impacted all VET sectors. The section concludes with a summary of these requirements across the sectors.

TAFE

Permanent and contract staff

During the last 10 years, there have been significant changes in both the nature of programs designed to provide skills in teaching, training and assessment, and the support given to staff by TAFE employers for such training. Prior to this, PD in TAFE was characterised by central staff development units and strong staff recruitment. New entrants received release time and fees were paid to attend university training, generally at one preferred provider. While some of these features may remain in some form, many employers no longer provide financial support and release time to attend such training. In addition, alternate in-house training of teaching staff has emerged in some systems, challenging traditional university undergraduate training.

While most TAFE systems have salary barriers, which require the completion of qualifications or their equivalent, these can vary. Research being undertaken in Victoria suggests that institutes have differing requirements for training and education credentials for their permanent staff (Office of Training and Further Education 1997). In New South Wales, however, beginning teachers are given release time and HECS support for their initial teacher training. At CIT, an internal 2-year part-time Certificate in Tertiary Education and Training is a requirement for all permanent staff,

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with subsequent voluntary access to a university diploma to enable staff to satisfy salary barrier requirements.

Permanent or contract staff are generally required or encouraged to complete an initial teaching skill development program. The nationally developed Teaching and Learning program or a locally devised induction and development program is frequently used. Credit transfer to subsequent university training is a common feature.

Within TAFE, there is strong and growing interest in both workplace trainer categories 1 and 2, and assessor standards and associated training programs for all categories of employment, including full-time permanent staff. Many respondents referred to plans for all permanent staff to have such qualifications within the next 1–2 two years. The push for workplace trainer programs appears to be emerging as an alternative to or in addition to programs such as Teaching and Learning or other TAFE initial teaching skills development programs. The need for assessor training is emerging from TAFE's increasing involvement in workplace training and assessment, including on-the-job traineeships, cooperative training arrangements with industry, initiatives such as the Frontline Management Initiative (FMI) and the proposed training packages.

In TAFE in New South Wales, the view is held that teachers are already competent in assessment relevant to performance at work (e.g. assessing the practical skills of trade training at TAFE). The issue is seen to be more one of TAFE teachers having confidence in conducting such assessments in industry, rather than as a weakness in their assessment skills.

TAFE teachers are generally required to have a diploma or, more recently, a degree in teaching or education. This is a result of most TAFE systems having their origins in departments of education, where tertiary qualifications in teaching or education were required for employment and progression.

Casual staff

The responsibility for the training of casual staff resides with the institute. In some cases, the completion of a recognised basic teaching skills program is a requirement of employment. For example, CIT encourages the completion of workplace trainer category 1. In New South Wales, part-time staff have access to benefits such as superannuation and sick leave. Positions are advertised and staff are selected through a formal system-wide procedure, which includes a selection panel.

However, in most cases, casual staff are encouraged but not required to have recognised teaching or training credentials for employment. Some institutes encourage casual staff to complete the workplace category 1 training; others use the Teaching and

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Learning program or a locally devised program, such as the Basic Teaching Skills course in WA.

The extent of financial support provided by employers to casual staff for their training varies, from all fees being paid (New South Wales and CIT), or a subsidy on full fees being provided to encourage participation. The Victorian research being undertaken indicates that on a per capita basis, casual staff receive significantly less institute resources for PD compared to permanent or contract staff.

While there are no figures on how many casual staff complete such training, feedback from respondents suggests about 50%. In TAFE systems, approximately half the training effort is provided by casual staff. Typically, casual staff also working in industry are employed to provide up-to-date technical skills and a knowledge in the delivery of TAFE programs. Although they are employed primarily for this industrial experience and knowledge, competence in teaching is also valued. An example of this is the encouragement given by employers or institutes to casual staff to develop their teaching effectiveness through further training.

An issue for the majority of respondents was the inconsistency between what is required of permanent and casual staff for the same function of teaching or training. However, there appear to be no moves within TAFE systems to ensure casual staff hold the same competencies as permanent staff. There are a number of reasons for the maintenance of the current employment conditions for casual staff. These include maintaining flexibility and simplicity in employment conditions, a recognition of their primary value in providing up-to-date industry experience, and the fact that they are supervised by professionally qualified staff.

Industry skills and qualifications

For permanent, contract and casual staff, there are requirements of 5 or more years of relevant industry experience, together with appropriate qualifications required for practice in their industry. The formal process of selecting permanent and contract staff includes the checking of experience and qualifications against selection criteria. For casual staff, selection is generally more informal. At CIT, there is a review in progress of staff development needs of casual staff. This indicates that in some discipline areas the requirement for 5 years industry experience has not been met overall, and staff selection criteria and procedures may need to be reviewed and tightened.

While it appears that the entry requirements associated with industry experience and qualifications are appropriate, there is no formal requirement for staff to maintain their technical and professional competence. For the permanent cohort of TAFE staff, particularly in some of the trade areas, this is a particularly difficult problem. Return to Industry (RTI) programs are a common strategy adopted by TAFE systems to assist their staff in maintaining the currency of their industry skills. Some systems report that

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these programs are under subscribed (Queensland and CIT). It appears that many staff feel insecure about returning to work in an industry sector that looks very different from that which they left many years ago.

In terms of assisting teaching staff to maintain and strengthen their technical skills, it is worth noting that the Victorian research indicated that 67% of institutes enrolled staff in their own technical courses and modules as a matter of policy.

SkillShare

Industrially, this sector has no requirement for formal qualifications in education and training. However, relevant industry experience and qualifications are required of training staff. The holding of workplace trainer category 2 competencies has emerged as a requirement in recent years with the introduction of accredited VET programs in SkillShare centres. In some areas, such as hospitality, this training credential is a requirement specified by industry.

Adult and community education

It appears that in terms of industrial requirements, there are few or no formal qualification requirements for staff selection. For example, there is no award rate for tutors in Victoria. However, in the selection process, tutors are expected to hold qualifications and experience considered appropriate to the discipline or industry skill they are teaching. The holding of relevant industry qualifications is an important element in the selection process by ACE providers in order to enhance the quality of their programs as seen by the community.

Frequent gathering of feedback from students on program relevance and tutor performance is a valuable quality assurance mechanism, which is characteristic of ACE.

The provision of accredited programs, such as VET or school programs, includes staff qualification and experience requirements prescribed by the curriculum or the accreditation and recognition body. In New South Wales, over 600 tutors are being put through a workplace trainer category 1 program (Teaching Adults), which addresses the unique aspects of ACE in program delivery. This is seen as a requirement for staff delivering in the formal VET area, and is required to be attained within 6 months of employment. Tutors associated with their informal program are also encouraged to attend. Some of the larger providers in New South Wales are offering workplace trainer category 2 and assessor training for contract and sessional staff. In rural areas, securing staff with such qualifications is more difficult. While at present there is not a large pool of graduates of these higher-level programs, numbers are expected to grow as the sector strengthens its position within VET.

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In general, there is little funding available for PD in ACE. Tutors and contract staff are required to attend trainer and assessor programs in their own time. However, fees are kept to a minimum or are discounted for tutors in order to encourage their participation. Frequently, within the informal program, coordinators bring tutors together at the beginning of the year to consider educational and methodological issues.

Private providers

The general requirement for employment in the private provider sector, in terms of VET provision, is 3–5 years of relevant industry experience and the relevant qualification required and recognised for practice in that industry sector. In terms of education and training requirements, the emphasis appears to be on proven performance as a facilitator, rather than on formal qualifications. Salary is not formally linked to the holding of educational qualifications.

However, the workplace trainer category 2 standards have emerged as a common requirement specified by State recognition bodies. It appears that many private providers see little value in their already competent practitioners gaining such formal recognition. There is a strong perception in this sector that such competencies or credentials do not necessarily lead to improved educational outcomes. It also appears that some casual training staff consider such requirements unnecessary and inconvenient. They believe that their industry competence, experience and proven performance as trainers is what should be valued.

Some providers are gaining approval to conduct such programs so that they can fast-track their staff to meet these standards.

The private sector prides itself on being different from the public training sector and, in so doing, supports a wide range of internal staff development programs linked to maintaining quality and a competitive edge. Examples include developing motivation of students and providing effective and sensitive educational services for Asian students.

Schools

Regarding the development of vocational education coordinators, a range of development workshops are offered by the Australian Student Traineeship Foundation (ASTF) in association with education systems in the States and Territories. In addition, workplace supervision programs are also offered to supervisors at workplaces in support of their on-the-job training and assessment role.

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Preparation for teachers consists of gaining knowledge and experience of the industry area and developing their skills in the workplace aspects of training and assessment. The nature of these skills and the approaches taken to develop them vary between systems. They depend on the design of vocational education programs and on issues such as who can certify the achievement of competencies in relation to subjects in higher-school certificates. For example, for New South Wales teachers a more school-based approach is taken to their VET programs, which involves a limited amount of on-the-job experience by students. In other systems, a more shared approach by schools and the workplace is taken in delivery and assessment. This has led to schoolteachers developing competencies associated with the workplace trainer and assessor competency standards as part of their development to deliver accredited VET programs in schools.

In South Australia, for example, the existing educational qualifications of teachers are considered adequate if there is no assessment against competency standards involved. Where assessment off-the-job is required, the assessment module within the workplace training category 2 program was identified as suitable to address the competency-based assessment skill needs of teachers. Over the past 2 years, approximately 1100 teachers have achieved the category 2 assessment standards through RPL and additional training. Furthermore, in order for teachers to train and assess both on- and off-the-job, completion of workplace trainer category 2 standards is required.

Universities, it appears, are considering a review of their undergraduate teacher education programs in order to prepare teachers for delivering VET in schools. In addition, there is much interest in postgraduate programs to support the continuing development of existing schoolteachers. For example, the graduate certificate in professional practice offered by the University of South Australia incorporates recognised PD undertaken by teachers, including their preparation for teaching VET in schools.

Enterprises

Within enterprises, the requirement for training staff to hold recognised training credentials varies greatly. There is much informal and incidental training occurring that goes largely unnoticed. In smaller enterprises, 'shop floor' trainers are often not required to have recognised training credentials, while in larger companies, it is a clear requirement. Workplace trainer category 1 is seen as especially important, particularly for staff for whom training is only part of their work responsibilities.

The Australian Institute of Training and Development (AITD) has adopted the workplace trainer category 2 competency standards as the core requirement for a training and development professional. Additional competencies associated with organisational development and managing change have been identified.

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In addition, there is an increasing requirement by employers for university-educated training professionals. Such staff, particularly in larger organisations, manage the training and development function, including the supervision of in-house trainers and subcontractors. Their role is one of design and support, rather than of training delivery. Over the last 10 years, there has been significant growth in the provision of human resource development degrees within the university sector. These are often delivered by the same department providing training for other sectors of VET, including TAFE and ACE. Both the AITD and the Assessors and Workplace Trainers CSB are encouraging universities to include the workplace trainer competencies within their training program.

Requirements of accreditation and recognition boards

Assessor or workplace trainer competencies and credentials, required by recognition bodies, have developed as a benchmark for skills and qualifications required by trainers.

Trainers who deliver training to groups of trainers on-the-job are required to complete workplace category 2 standards. Off-the-job trainers who are only employed on a short-term basis are exempt, providing they are supervised by appropriately qualified staff. Trainers who generally work one-on-one or in small groups need workplace trainer category 1 standards.

There are concerns within some sectors as to the need for such requirements or the apparent inconsistencies in their application. For example, the manager representing SkillShare expressed concern that the accreditation body VETAB require assessor qualifications for all staff, even those who deliver only institution-based programs.

There appears to be a general feeling within ACPET that accreditation and registration bodies have 'gone overboard' in requiring such formal credentials of trainers and teachers. Concern was also expressed regarding the impact of the requirements of recognition bodies on small private providers, where the one or two staff involved with a particular program are all required to have the qualification. This is in contrast with larger providers such as TAFE, where not all delivery staff have to satisfy the requirements. These variations in the application of registration and accreditation guidelines were considered to disadvantage the small operator in the private sector.

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Summary

The skill and credential requirements associated with assessor and workplace competency standards, required by State recognition bodies, have had a major impact on PD across all sectors of VET. There have been major programs of PD aimed at achieving these standards for all employment categories of staff, across all sectors. However, not all sectors believe the requirements led to improved training outcomes.

In terms of the functions of teaching and training, most TAFE systems link the achievement of university credentials in teaching or education to salary steps for its TAFE teachers. In terms of industrial agreements, other sectors appear not to have this requirement.

The workplace trainer standards appear to be well-supported in terms of their relevance to the functions of training and assessment. In some cases, training programs linked to those standards have taken the place of established internal initial teaching and training skill development programs. These standards, together with essential industrial skills and experience, make up the key requirements to be a trainer. Furthermore, VET employers seek to employ casual or contract staff who are also working within their industry sector, so as to ensure currency of industrial skills within the delivery of their VET programs.

For managers and coordinators of training, these standards are seen as only part of their requirements. They are seen to need a wider range of skills and knowledge associated with the development of education and training systems, human resource management and the supervision, selection and appraisal of trainers.

PD issues

In this section, a range of PD issues which emerged for the consideration of employment, skill and qualification trends are explored.

Teaching and training programs provided by the VET sector

For many years, VET providers have offered internal basic teaching skills programs for permanent, contract and casual staff. Examples of these are Train the Trainer and, more recently, the Teaching and Learning program, which has been adopted by several TAFE systems.

Increasingly, all sectors of VET are adopting the assessor and workplace competency standards, and appropriate industrial experience, skills and qualifications as the essential requirements for their training staff.

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There has been a major involvement by all sectors of VET in staff development programs relating to these training standards. In many cases, these programs replaced the Teaching and Learning program or other internally provided programs. Their link with endorsed standards and association with workplace training add to their appeal.

The Teaching and Learning program is highly valued, particularly in terms of its flexible delivery, mentor support, continuous enrolment and as a model of good training practice. The program is particularly relevant to TAFE's institution-based provision. In South Australia, there are plans for one of the modules to be delivered on-line so that staff can experience a further contemporary mode of training delivery. A recent revision to the Teaching and Learning program has resulted in it receiving three units of credit towards Certificate IV in Workplace Training. It is understood that consideration is being given to a further revision of Teaching and Learning in order that it incorporate the workplace trainer and assessor standards. Such a program would cover a fuller spectrum of training, learning and assessment competencies applicable within training institutions, workplaces and integrated on- and off-the-job training arrangements.

An example relevant to such developments is the Certificate in Tertiary Education and Training provided by CIT for its permanent and contract staff, open to casual staff when places are available. This 2-year part-time program adopts an action-learning approach, using experienced teachers and managers as facilitators. It also incorporates the workplace trainer and assessor standards. Such developments reflect the importance TAFE places on teaching staff having the full range of recognised training and assessment skills needed to operate in a diverse and open training market. Also, TAFE is assuming a greater level of responsibility in providing its own training to meet these standards, rather than relying on other providers such as universities.

While there is a view that the workplace trainer programs appear to be appropriate for the function of teaching or training within most sectors of VET, the situation within TAFE is more complex. In many quarters they are seen to be appropriate for casual TAFE teaching staff. Also, in many TAFE institutes, permanent staff are required to complete these programs as a form of continuing PD, and as part of requirements to deliver work-based training. These programs, however, are not intended to provide a deep understanding of learning theories and instructional design. Thus, they are seen by some in TAFE as insufficient for the delivery of vocational education within an institutional setting, particularly to the education of full-time students.

This view is held elsewhere, for example in industry, where higher-level competencies are needed for trainers who teach other trainers. The need for category 3 standards was raised.

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However, several TAFE systems also question the appropriateness of requiring permanent or contract staff, who are predominantly involved in teaching or training, hold a degree or diploma.

Teaching and training programs provided by the university sector

Several VET sectors have strong links with universities in the provision of training for their staff; in particular, TAFE, ACE, enterprises (through human resource management/training and development programs), and schools. At employer or organisational level, private providers and SkillShare appear to have limited associations with university programs.

The TAFE and school systems have a tradition of giving greater recognition to the function or profession of teaching, requiring staff hold a degree or diploma in teaching or education. For TAFE, this picture is more complex in that it has different requirements for casual staff and permanent teaching staff.

The relationship between universities and TAFE in the provision of PD has changed significantly in recent years. In the era of strong recruitment in TAFE, each State generally had one preferred university provider, and TAFE staff were supported in terms of release time and fees. Currently, the picture is more varied, with some States severing the relationship between university credentials and salary steps, and some no longer providing paid release time or HECS fees. Where qualifications are tied to salary steps, attaining those qualifications is increasingly seen as the responsibility of individual staff and rewarded by the employer financially, including access to expanded career opportunities.

A common opinion in TAFE is that the traditional universities have not been sufficiently sensitive to TAFE's changing needs, including the practice of CBT and the modelling of diverse training delivery and assessment pathways. In some cases, the extent and quality of liaison between the two appears to be limited. In most States, there are now a range of university providers active in the development of VET staff. For example, in TAFE in New South Wales, Charles Sturt University provides undergraduate training as well as the established provider, the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). In the postgraduate area, there are a wider range of providers involved in cooperative arrangements, including the University of NSW, University of New England and the University of Western Sydney. Teacher education previously provided by Canberra University for CIT has been replaced by its own internal program and access to a Diploma in Adult Education from the University of Tasmania.

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For universities, their client base has also changed significantly, as has the nature of their programs. Previously, they tended to provide separate programs for different sectors of VET, such as TAFE and ACE. With the decline in TAFE recruitment, and the increased attention to VET within industry, private and community provision, universities have reviewed and rationalised their programs, often with a common theme of adult education. For example, at UTS there had been six separate undergraduate awards; these have now been replaced by a single BEd (Adult education) program. This has four streams: language and literacy, human resource development, vocational education, and community education. UTS plans to combine the vocational education and human resource development streams due to the increasing overlap in skills and responsibilities of these two work areas. Similarly, the University of South Australia has combined its various degree offerings into a single Bachelor of Adult Education.

Managers who were consulted identified the need for staff in training management positions to have a depth of education and training skills and knowledge, as well as business-related skills of management, marketing and human resource development.

The impact of a competitive training market will accentuate the need for permanent staff in VET to operate across industry sectors and occupations, and to lead and supervise casual and contract training staff. The need for industry-specific skills is not a key requirement for such staff. However, skills in developing new business, marketing services and selecting and developing trainers to deliver more diverse training services will be essential. This need appears to apply across all sectors of VET. Furthermore, the plans by UTS to combine its HRD and vocational education streams is a further recognition of the range of skills required at that level.

Student numbers within universities appear to be strong, with a more diverse student population reflecting the broader VET industry. Students from the TAFE sector are predominantly casual or contract staff, studying with the purpose of strengthening their teaching and training skills and assisting them compete for contract or permanent positions. As a consequence, many staff who are selected for permanent or contract positions have already completed all or part of their university training credentials, gained while they held more casual positions of employment.

Several universities more recently involved in developing VET staff are active in flexible and cooperative postgraduate training arrangements. These include giving credit for VET-provided PD and joint teaching of university units. These new players are seen to be 'working harder', particularly in the growing areas of continuing PD. The nationally developed Graduate Certificate in Training (Action-Learning) is well supported in TAFE and is offered through several registered training providers. In New South Wales, TAFE and the University of Sydney - Hawkesbury jointly offers the program. In Victoria, the Western Institute of TAFE and LaTrobe University cooperate in the delivery of a Graduate Diploma in VET. Furthermore, CIT has its own internal Graduate Certificate in Advanced Professional Practice, and is developing

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one in educational management. Both of these will connect with further postgraduate programs at New England and Charles Sturt universities. Both The University of Tasmania and UTS have graduate certificates in VET, flexibly delivered, which include the workplace trainer and assessor competency standards.

With the move into VET by both ACE and schools, there is a need for continuing PD for existing staff, particularly for coordinators and program managers. In New South Wales, the school system and UTS are developing a graduate certificate for schoolteachers teaching VET.

In ACE, many managers and coordinators have come from the school sector and have undertaken postgraduate training in ACE. In most States, there are well-developed links with the university sector in the provision of adult education programs. An example of cooperation with the university sector is the Certificate in the Management of ACE, a cooperative venture between the Evening Community Colleges Association of NSW and the UTS. This program is delivered by the ACE sector using a flexible means of delivery based on email.

While there has been little association between SkillShare and universities in terms of PD, there appears to be potential interest in postgraduate training in the area of human resource management and adult learning principles. An example of cooperative arrangements with Deakin University was cited where credit was given for an internal program (Working Agreements Training) within a graduate diploma in VET.

As mentioned, universities are being encouraged to include the workplace trainer and assessor standards within the outcomes of their programs.

While this information on recent cooperative arrangements with universities is not meant to be exhaustive, it does demonstrate a new wave of jointly designed and flexibly delivered postgraduate programs involving a wider range of universities. VET providers and staff are also exercising their 'user choice' prerogatives in selecting universities to provide programs and services relevant to their contemporary needs. This will enable them to operate within a more flexible and open training market.

Relationship between training functions, competencies and qualifications

Increasingly, all sectors of VET are adopting the assessor and workplace standards, as well as appropriate industrial experience, skills and qualifications as the essential requirements for the function of training. However, these are seen as insufficient for the function of vocational education teaching and training, within a diverse range of environments, including institutional teaching. Additional skills and knowledge have been identified for staff who manage teaching and training.

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The absence of agreed competency standards embracing a full range of functions associated with teaching, training and assessment has not assisted the definition of skills and training required. The Victorian Association of TAFE Directors, on behalf of the Victorian Office of Training and Further Education, is currently developing competency standards for the VET industry within Victoria. Upon completion of these standards, the opportunity will exist to validate those standards more widely and to use them as a basis to review State and national teaching, training and assessment programs.

The consultations indicate that competencies and qualifications in teaching and training are required at several levels. For example, for an on-the-job trainer and sessional VET teacher/trainer, technical competence is of paramount importance, together with basic skills in training. For a manager of training, higher levels of education/training and management competencies are needed, applicable across a wide range of technical and vocational areas.

The following model describes one possible way of linking competencies, functions, and qualifications for VET training and management staff.

BALANCE OF COMPETENCIES	Technical competence		Training/teaching competence	
TRAINING FUNCTIONS	on-the-job training, sessional teaching	off-the-job training, sessional teaching	institution-based teaching, integrated on- and off-the-job	design and management of teaching/ training
QUALIFICATIONS	workplace trainer category 1	workplace trainer category 2	certificate or diploma	degree

The certificate or diploma program could be offered by TAFE, by universities, or as a joint operation between the two. A 1-year program could be offered by universities, covering a wider range of skills associated with business and human resource management. Full articulation between programs would be expected.

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It appears that the certificate/diploma level and the degree level are in need of review. The consultations reported the need to review the Teaching and Learning program and its links with workplace category 2 standards. The developments at CIT are relevant to this task. Several universities have reviewed their undergraduate degree programs. However, the need expressed by managers for such programs to address matters of education and training design, management, marketing and human resource development should be taken into account. Consultations in both these areas, including the competency standards work, should involve all sectors of VET.

Changing responsibilities for PD

At both the organisational and individual level, responsibilities for PD are changing. There has been a trend both within TAFE and within larger enterprises for PD activities to be devolved from central training departments to the place of service delivery or production.

In other sectors of VET, especially ACE and private providers, PD responsibilities have resided with the provider, with little or no support at the system level. ACPET has recognised the need for better networking of PD within the private provider sector. Large providers are able to support their own PD, while smaller operators lack the infrastructure. The independence of the individual providers mitigates against cooperative PD activities.

Devolution has created a new dynamic in the management of PD in TAFE. Institute managers appear to vary in their commitment to PD. Several TAFE managers with central staff development responsibilities identified the need to further review the role of their central agency and its relationship with individual institutes. This raised the need for:

- increased accountability by institute management for PD, including performance contracts;
- assistance to institute management in the strategic use of PD;
- evaluations of PD programs and activities and the role of the central agency in evaluation; and
- effective dissemination of best practice in PD within the TAFE system.

Research has shown that there has been a shift in the responsibility for PD from the employer to the employee. Respondents considered that individuals will assume greater responsibilities for maintaining their skills and experience in both education and technical areas. This is particularly true for casual and contract staff. For example, staff will continue to be motivated to undertake university studies for both personal and professional reasons.

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With the increasing use of casual staff in VET, employers are expecting training staff to come 'ready trained' and be more responsible for maintaining their technical and training skills. While it is expected that the employer will continue to offer PD in areas of importance to the provider, the cost associated with attendance and fees will increasingly be met by the individual. Offering a higher rate of pay for holding training qualifications was suggested by one respondent as a strategy for encouraging casual staff to engage in PD. It should be noted that this approach applies to permanent staff in most TAFE systems in that they are rewarded financially for gaining credentials in education and training.

A new breed of training professional has evolved who maintains and develops his/her portfolio of skills by investing in his/herself. Many who have entered the VET workforce over the past 5 years do not expect permanent employment. There has also been a growth in independent training professionals operating as companies. They provide training services to one or more provider or enterprise, on a negotiated outcomes basis.

Maintaining the technical competence of VET trainers

The maintenance of the technical skills and experience of training staff is a major issue in the provision of quality training services.

In order to ensure that industry experience is current, private providers and ACE use only contract and casual staff who are also industry practitioners. The hiring of full-time staff, beyond a small core group, is not a part of their staffing policies. Research in progress at CIT indicates the importance of ensuring that casual staff have up-to-date industry experience and skills.

TAFE is a major user of casual staff in its pursuit of staff flexibility and up-to-date technical skills. However, for its permanent staff, the maintenance of technical competence is a major concern. Many staff feel trapped as their industries become largely unrecognisable to them. As the currency of technical skills and experience is such a critical issue in the provision of VET programs, the wisdom of having a large cohort of permanent training delivery staff is called into question. There are considerable difficulties and costs associated with trying to maintain the technical skills of permanent staff.

There is also an increasing cohort of casual staff working up to a full-time teaching load. This strategy may achieve the desired goals of staffing flexibility and cost effectiveness, however, the issue of such casual staff being able to maintain their industry competence in such a work role is called into question.

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Quality of programs

Concerns regarding program quality through increased use of casual staff and the pursuit of outcomes in an increasingly competitive training market were expressed by SkillShare and some TAFE respondents. However, the predominantly contract and casual staffing of the private provider, ACE and enterprise sectors, questions the notion that permanent staffing is required to ensure quality of provision. As noted, TAFE has its challenges in maintaining the technical competence of its permanent workforce. In addition, there is evidence that casual and contract training staff are highly qualified (e.g., by undertaking university studies in education and training, developing their role of independent training professionals, and extending their technical skills through on-going industry experience).

Within ACE, the casual and short-term nature of sessional provision makes it difficult for employers to support PD, particularly for smaller providers and those in rural locations. Staff qualifications and associated PD are expected to be of increasing importance to the ACE sector in the future.

A particular concern for the private sector is the coordination of independent providers in the design and delivery of PD. Larger providers have the capacity to offer PD that is unique to their needs. However, this is more difficult for the small provider. As mentioned earlier, there is a concern that requiring workplace category 2 qualifications is a simplistic and over-bureaucratic approach to quality.

The need for currency of training and assessment competencies was also raised as a concern, particularly in relation to holders of educational degrees issued many years ago. The need for continuing development of trainers and assessors, including the need for re-certification, was raised.

In relation to training programs associated with the workplace training standards, various concerns and criticisms were raised, including:

- the need for training and assessment to be developed in the context of the relevant industry sector;
- the rather mechanistic approaches to provision used by some providers;
- the need for more on-the-job training as part of certification requirements; and
- the over-generous allocation of RPL, particularly by providers offering training to their own trainers

Furthermore, the CSB highlighted the importance of encouraging providers to have moderation sessions with other providers of workplace training and assessment, as well as industry audits of providers to ensure outcomes are achieved as presented in curriculum documentation.

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Several respondents expressed concern at the lack of inquiry into the effectiveness of PD programs and their outcomes. The need for a range of evaluation strategies was identified, including informal feedback from participants to facilitators, and formal reviews to assess the impact of PD on achieving organisational goals. Just as effective PD is seen to model good training practice, evaluation of PD should also be encouraged to assist teachers and trainers in assessing their own performance.

Summary of employment and qualification trends

Like all other sectors of industry, VET has undergone and is continuing to undergo major organisational reforms. These include changing products and services and new ways of working to satisfy customer needs. Previous ways of operating, based on secure markets and limited competition, has led to cumbersome, inflexible and expensive working arrangements. Currently, permanent and on-going employment is no longer the norm. Handy writes that the massive reductions in on-going employment have led to a smaller core of employees who are predominantly professionals and managers. Much of the operational work is contracted out or undertaken by a more flexible labour force of part-time and contract employees. Each group, Handy writes, needs to be managed uniquely as they have different expectations of their work and of the company (Handy 1991).

The employment models applyed within the VET sector are consistent with these broader trends, that is:

- a smaller core of education and training design professionals and managers with a longer-term association with the VET enterprise;
- contracting out training services to individuals and companies who are paid a fee for the provision of services at a specified standard; and
- a flexible labour force of part-time, contract and sessional training staff.

Many of the trainers now working as contractors or as part of the more flexible workforce were previously employees of the earlier organisations. As Handy points out, such new work organisations provide a greater variety of work environments and characteristics. For the contractor, there is independence in the pace and location of work. For the part-time worker, their focus may be on the job rather than on a career, together with a variety of other life interests. However, Handy points out that organisations need to invest in their flexible labour force so as to ensure they operate at the company standards. This research has raised the issue of investing in the development of contract and casual training staff. From the client's perspective—be it an employer, trainee or student—the employment status of the trainer is not of primary concern, but the quality of the training service is.

This research has shown that many sectors of VET—in particular ACE, private providers and enterprises—have had flexible labour arrangements for some time.

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TAFE and schools, with their larger structures and links to government bureaucracies, have come from a different base. The consultations with TAFE organisations indicate that a new breed of contract trainer has emerged, one who has not come from a background of permanent employment and does not necessarily expect permanency.

While many VET providers have reformed their organisations and services, many have some way to go before they operate effectively within an open training market. This is not to say there is only one organisational and employment model. The ideal operating environment for a particular training provider will be affected by a range of factors including size, range and level of programs, nature of teaching or training, and characteristics of its students or trainees. A large TAFE institute will have different requirements and features compared to a small niche-market private provider.

However, across the sectors of VET there are some common trends in employment and qualification requirements of VET training staff. These are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1

Area	Aspects of change
Employment	• separating the function of training design and management from the function of training • smaller core of professional educators/managers and a larger cohort of contract and casual trainers and consultants • creation of trainer and tutor classifications in TAFE • growth of independent trainers/companies servicing one or more VET providers and sectors • mobility of training staff between sectors of VET
Responsibility	• devolution of responsibilities, including PD from central agencies to VET providers • VET enterprises responsible for planning, funding and provision of PD development to meet corporate objectives • VET providers negotiating PD provision from outside contractors, including universities • employers and training staff sharing responsibilities for enterprise-provided PD • training staff responsible for maintaining and developing technical and training competence, including university-based training

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Programs	• workplace trainer competency standards becoming a basic requirement for training staff • recognition of additional competencies required for training staff operating in range of teaching and training environments • reduced reliance on university teacher education programs for trainers • increased VET provision of formal PD including graduate certificates and the use of VET courses for technical update of staff • more universities servicing PD needs of VET • greater range of postgraduate programs featuring flexible, cooperative and articulated provision • rationalisation of undergraduate university programs recognising similarities of staff skills between the various sectors of VET

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Appendix A

TAFE and State training authorities

John Mitchell, Human Resources, SA Department of Employment, Training and Further Education

Susan Young, Para Institute of TAFE, South Australia

Geoff Rogerson, Victorian Institute of College Directors, Victoria

Shirley Gregg, Training Operations, DIRVET, Tasmania

Juris Varpins, Department of Training, Western Australia

Glen Villiers, Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE, Victoria

Val Evans, Staff Training & Development Bureau, TAFE, NSW

Berwyn Clayton and Margaret Peoples, Canberra Institute of Technology

Andrew Mann, Organisational Development, TAFE Queensland

Adult and community education

Robyn Mayer, Evening Colleges Association of NSW

John Shugg, Adult and Community Education, Victoria

Private providers

Clive Graham, ACPET—National

Pamela Walsh, ACPET—SA

Julie Manuel, Clements School of Management

Denis Slape, SA Registered Providers Inc.

Enterprise

Lewis Hughes, Australian Institute of Training and Development

Ken Shinkfield, Unique Consulting

John Heidt, Professional Educators and Workplace Trainers and Assessors Association

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Schools

Jacki Shimeld, Australian Student Traineeship Foundation

Mike Frost, VETNETwork, Tasmania

Fran Maloney, Department of School Education, NSW

Paul Willis, Department of Education and Childrens Services

Universities

Ruth Cohen, University of Technology, Sydney

David Snewin and Michele Simons, University of South Australia

Richard Pickersgill, University of Sydney

SkillShare

Dona Martin, National SkillShare Association, Sydney

Assessor and Workplace Trainer CSB

Robyn Alexander, Sydney

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Appendix B

Trends in employment, skills and qualifications and professional development of vet staff

1 Employment trends

In this section we are interested in trends in employment and recruitment of VET staff who develop, deliver or assess training. The categorisation of employment we are using is:

- permanent (or 'on-going' staff)
- contract (or limited tenure)
- casual (or part-time, sessional, hourly paid).

In the permanent and contract categories there may exist, in your organisation, a further division into:

- professional VET staff, who primarily design programs and supervise trainers and casual staff, and
- trainers/assistant teachers/lecturers who are primarily involved in delivery and assessment.

1a. In general terms, what is the current mix of the various employment categories within your organisation? (This could be expressed in terms of staff numbers, proportions, or in terms of the 'teaching/training' effort provided by each category)

1b. In which employment categories are staff currently being recruited?

2 What is considered a desirable ratio of employment categories over the next 3 years? What objectives and attributes are being sought in such a mix?

3 What factors will facilitate or hinder the achievement of such objectives?

4 What are the general implications for professional development (PD) of permanent, contract and casual staff as a result of these employment trends? (e.g. nature of PD, funding and responsibility for PD)

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2 Skills and qualifications

In this section we are interested in the skills and qualifications of the various employment categories—permanent, contract and casual, in terms of initial or entry to employment, and continuing employment, and competence in technical/discipline areas and education and training.

It should be noted that the contributions of VET sector and the university sector to the development of VET staff are considered in more detail in sections 3 and 4.

5 What skills and qualifications are required under industrial awards and agreements? (for permanent, contract and casual staff; for initial and continuing development; for technical/discipline and education and training competence)

6 What skills and qualifications are required to meet industry requirements and/or expectations? (for permanent, contract and casual staff; for initial and continuing development; for technical/discipline and education and training competence)

7 What skills and qualifications are encouraged or are part of local arrangements, but are not within industrial agreements? (e.g. basic teaching skills for casual staff) (for permanent, contract and casual staff; for initial and continuing development; for technical/discipline and education and training competence)

8 What qualifications are required by State/Territory registration and recognition bodies?

9 Are these skills and qualifications appropriate in terms of your current and future training provision? Are there any gaps? Are any differences, if any, between the skills and qualifications requirements of/undertaken by, permanent, contract and casual staff, appropriate? What changes do you recommend?

3 Initial and continuing development of VET staff—provided by the VET sector

In this section we are interested in issues and developments associated with VET level development of VET staff (e.g. initial basic teaching/facilitation skills)

10 What is working well? Are there examples of successful practice? (for permanent, contract and casual staff; for initial and continuing development; for technical/discipline and education and training competence)

11 What is the current use of, or requirement for workplace trainer and assessor programs? Are these skills/qualifications appropriate to your needs? What changes do you recommend?

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12 In terms of the National Training Framework (NTF) and the New Apprenticeship System (NAS), what PD initiatives have been taken? What else do you need to do?

13 What improvements, if any, are required to current VET sector provision of PD? Are there any gaps? What changes do you recommend? (for permanent, contract and casual staff; for initial and continuing development; for technical/discipline and education and training competence)

4 Initial and continuing development of VET staff-provided by the university sector

In this section we are interested in issues and developments associated with the role and provision of the university sector to the initial and continuing development of VET staff.

14 What is working well? Are there examples of successful practice? (for permanent, contract and casual staff; for initial and continuing development; for technical/discipline and education and training competence)

15 How should the university sector be responding in relation to the NTF and NAS?

16 What improvements, if any, are required to current university sector provision of PD? Are there any gaps? Are the relevant Universities in your State/Territory making/or plan to make changes in the way they provide PD for VET staff? What changes do you recommend? (for permanent, contract and casual staff; for initial and continuing development; for technical/discipline and education and training competence)

5 Other issues and trends associated with employment and professional development of VET staff

17 What other issues and trends in the professional development of VET staff do you want to mention in relation to the preparation of competent training staff to support quality training services in a competitive training market?

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Volume 1: Final Report

ROGER HARRIS AND MICHELE SIMONS

Introduction

The overall project has researched professional development (PD) in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. Reviews of PD in this sector, undertaken in other phases of this project, have shown that PD is not yet appreciated sufficiently, or planned and implemented, as a strategic activity. These reviews have suggested that most programs have operated on a more *ad hoc*, 'gut feeling' level and often have not been connected to planned change. This lack of strategic appreciation of PD has contributed to the widespread treatment of PD programs as peripheral to core activity by many providers. As a consequence, they are often perceived less to be a part of normal work and more as competing with it.

The key research question here is 'What strategies are available to VET managers to integrate PD effectively into the planning, implementation and evaluation of training policies and outcomes consistent with the National Training Framework?'.

The limitation of the skill base within VET may have been one of several factors that affected the implementation of earlier VET policies and will similarly impact on the extent and quality of current policy implementation. While there are examples of effective PD approaches using work-based and action-learning (AL) methods, the pursuit of comprehensive and effective PD strategies aimed at strengthening the skill base of the VET system remains a priority issue.

The research has also shown the PD initiatives that were planned and integrated within a planning process aimed at achieving VET objectives were more effective in achieving long-term change. Frequently, in the cases of successful organisational change, 'people development' was not considered a separate activity and was often not referred to as PD. Rather, it was more an 'invisible' activity, integrated into good management strategies aimed at achieving agreed goals.

Increased devolution of responsibilities from central agencies to training providers, including human resource development functions, has occurred. This, together with increased competition between providers and an expansion of user choice, has resulted in management within training providers—both public and private—having major responsibilities for implementing VET system outcomes. Management needs to

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consider staff competence and its development as a business strategy, aimed at providing quality training outcomes in a competitive training market.

This phase of the project focusses on cases of VET policy implementation, where PD was reported to have been a significant factor. The primary emphasis is on the broader change management processes that have included appropriate formal or informal PD strategies in the pursuit of quality training outcomes, rather than on specific PD activities. The research aimed to:

- identify and document cases of VET policy implementation that incorporate the strategic use of PD
- advise on management and organisational strategies that incorporate the development of staff and lead to the provision of quality training services in a decentralised and competitive training market.

The report is designed to inform VET managers and staff of ways in which effective PD can pay off in the successful implementation of policy objectives. The primary audience is intended to be managers within training providers, with value also for human resource and PD managers, and managers in central agencies in the VET sector.

Overview of the literature

An examination of the VET literature in relation to PD reveals a vast selection of case studies about how organisations have implemented programs to develop their staff. A fewer number of authors explore the strategic use of PD. Perspectives on the issues can be drawn from authors writing in a number of contexts: enterprises of varying sizes and vocational education and training institutions including schools in Australia and overseas. A selective analysis of these works reveals a number of key ideas that assist in framing this project. A more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of PD outside the VET context can be found by reference to the vast store of writings on human resource development and, more broadly, the literature on educational innovation and change.

It is clear that processes such as devolution, decentralisation and an increasing emphasis on performance within organisations have influenced approaches to PD (see Management Advisory Board and Management Improvement Advistory Committee 1992; Holland 1994). Responsibility for the PD of staff is increasingly viewed as a shared responsibility between individuals and their manager/supervisor rather than the sole providence of a centralised training unit. There is a move away from *ad hoc* 'one-off' training courses to a more strategic and integrated approach where PD is seen as serving two functions: contributing to the broader human resource functions of the organisation and meeting the individual development needs of staff. These individual development needs are often more closely aligned with staff learning new and more

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effective ways of working rather than for promotion (which was often a motivating factor for undertaking training and development activities in the past).

In a similar vein, a study was conducted by the Business Council of Australia of 22 companies and their training practices (Business Council of Australia 1990). This demonstrated that training and development was seen as integral to the company's business plans and was undertaken as part of a long-term strategy to achieve a number of goals (e.g., implementing cultural change, increasing retention of staff, etc.).

Research with small- to medium-sized enterprises reveals the importance of flexibility and adaptability to these organisations and the consequent

> ... preference for 'hands-on' and 'ad hoc' kinds of training irrespective of the additional pressure of cost constraints ...
>
> (Hendry *et al.* 1991)

This report also notes that where a SME is present in an evolving market it is increasing difficult to systematise training. This leads to PD strategies that are characterised by step-wise processes and often provided on an 'as needs' basis.

Developing the capacity of the workforce of organisations at all levels through the strategic use of PD is best summed up by Lansbury when he wrote:

> The importance of developing the capacity for learning within the workforce, and not just amongst managerial and professional employees, is a key issue. An effective organisation is one that fosters learning as a key characteristic or becomes a learning system itself. This ... should be a vital part of its forward planning process.
>
> (Lansbury 1992)

In adopting this strategic approach to PD, studies have revealed some consensus about the key factors that contribute to the success of these processes (see Dalmau in Management Advisory Board and Management Improvement Advisory Committee 1992 and Harris 1992; Routh 1993; Schaafsma 1995). These key factors include:

- the importance of a strong commitment to PD from chief executives/managers (This was seen to be an important factor in determining how staff perceived the value of PD. Additionally, if this involvement occurred, it was more likely that decisions about training and development would be considered in the light of corporate objectives and decisions.);
- the linking of training to corporate objectives;
- the active participation of staff in developing human resource development plans (This was seen to be particularly important for smaller agencies.);
- the need for training based on some form of needs assessment;
- the importance of processes which enhance collaboration between staff;

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- acknowledgment that PD is a process that builds on the existing knowledge and skills of staff; and

- the need for flexible and individualised processes that discourage the view of PD as indoctrination, in contrast to a process that 'facilitates creative learning effort' (Harris 1992).

Literature from the USA on the use of PD in schools and colleges—where innovations in vocational education have been implemented—reinforces and extends the importance of these factors. This literature is particularly informative as it deals directly with the development of teachers within a vocational education and training context, albeit within a system with significant differences from the Australian one. Key notions emerge in relation to the use of PD from this literature.

- PD is integral to the introduction of an innovation for all levels of staff (e.g., support staff, administrators, teachers). The nature of this PD will vary, encompassing events such as briefings, meetings and intensive workshops. These will be on-going during the period of introduction, through to and including the evaluation of its outcomes (Harvey 1992).

- PD needs to acknowledge the importance of changing the mindsets of people, as well as increasing their knowledge and skills. In the case of vocational education and training staff, this often means a rethinking of some of their basic philosophical notions about their work as teachers (Hoerner 1992).

- The importance of appropriate and timely PD activities which often might commence with more formal PD. This provides initial immediate information about the innovation followed by a range of PD strategies which could take a variety of forms (Nelson 1992).

- Effective PD for vocational education and training staff is a 'threefold activity'. It needs to ensure that teachers:
  - are well-equipped in their technical areas of expertise,
  - have a solid foundation of teaching/training skills, and
  - have opportunities to develop personally and professionally.

This third element is viewed as important because, without this encouragement, people may not develop the commitment to remain in their job. Professional and personal development occurs through activities that allow individuals to feel they are making a contribution to their profession. It also enhances opportunities for the development of collegial relationships beyond the immediate working environment and provides the individual with activities and experiences that are intellectually stimulating (Askins & Galloy 1992; Holliday 1995).

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- Success with PD activities is markedly increased if it is based on a teacher's preferences and needs. This approach, however, does not mitigate the need for some central coordinating or quality control mechanisms (Askins & Galloy 1992).

- PD that supports the introduction of an innovation should ensure that the teacher is put 'at the centre of the innovation' (Ball & Morrissey 1992). This philosophy aims to empower teachers to deal with the challenge of change in a pro-active rather than reactive manner.

These themes shape an approach to PD that can be characterised as a process which:

- is designed for teachers/staff;
- views the planning and delivery of PD as two interwoven rather than sequential processes;
- finds its impetus from within an organisation, using outside resources as necessary, but which is not driven by outside agents; and
- uses methods to develop the knowledge and skills of staff which essentially model the essential VET concepts (Harris 1992).

These approaches to PD are underpinned by particular ideas about change that have received widespread exposure in literature (see Fullan 1991; 1993). While not wanting to oversimplify what is often a complex process, the following ideas about change are a useful starting point.

- Change or innovation needs to be contextualised for each organisation (Fowler *et al.* 1995). Proposed changes need to be explored so that concerns and needs of staff can be exposed and attended to.

- Assessing readiness for change is important. Such an assessment will facilitate the development of concrete strategies for facilitating change, a deeper understanding of the developmental challenge and role of staff in facilitating change.

- Change takes time, collegiality, collaboration, and consistent and sustained follow-up for long-term effects to be realised.

- Change may sometimes require approaches that might be incompatible with current organisational structures, policies or philosophies. This incompatibility needs to be acknowledged and attended to.

- Innovation that involves multi-site or system-wide change needs to acknowledge the differences that will exist between and within sites, rather than assuming a 'one-size-fits-all' philosophy.

- Successful change is facilitated by a clear delineation of responsibilities and relationships of all parties involved in the process.

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The management of change and strategic use of PD presents a significant challenge to the contemporary VET organisation. Lessons from previous experiences can offer some valuable insights which managers and other staff charged with the responsibility of PD can use selectively to inform, clarify and support their chosen strategies. The literature does not reveal 'recipes' for success but rather sets of often overlapping concepts. These emphasise the importance of integrated approaches to planning PD, which give equal value to both organisational and individual staff aspirations, concerns and needs in an environment that fosters collaboration and collegiality. In other words, the strategic use of PD necessitates that equal attention be paid to the technical and human dimensions of training and development. It must also be underpinned by a well-developed understanding of the processes of change and innovation.

Research methodology

The research involved literature reviews and site interviews. Much of the literature reviewing had been carried out for the previous phases of this project. A selected literature review was undertaken for this phase, specifically on the strategic use of PD in the VET sector.

Consultations and discussions were held, either face-to-face or by telephone, with VET managers in each State and Territory. These conversations generated a list of approximately 25 examples where there were reports of effective VET policy implementation. What was deemed 'effective' was intentionally left open to interpretation at this early stage. Cases were to:

- come from different States/Territories;
- be spread across the VET sector (e.g., TAFE, private providers, enterprises, industry providers, etc.);
- illustrate changes in different aspects of VET policy; and
- illustrate changes of different scope and level (e.g., system wide, regional, organisational, departmental, programmatic, etc.).

These examples were categorised and 10 case study sites were finally selected at a Steering Committee meeting in Adelaide in late May 1997. The table provides an overview of these sites.

State	*Organisation*	*Scope of change*	*Nature of change*	*Sector of VET*	*Nature of PD*
Queensland	Cooloola Institute of TAFE (comprising 14 campuses and centres)	Program area (Engineering section)	Flexible delivery of engineering courses	TAFE	Flexible delivery development Visits interstate Visits to industry Use of key catalyst staff to up-skill and support others

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Queensland	Lorraine Martin College (comprising campuses in Brisbane, Cairns and Sydney)	Program area (Commerce)	Flexible delivery of accounting and book-keeping courses	Private provider	PD needs of individual staff identified Team-based approach Skills for resource-based learning
NSW	SkillShare network (comprising 12 associations in Hunter Region)	Regional	Implementation of RPL policy and procedures	Industry provider	'CBT in Action' program Orientation session Six-month action-learning program involving three 'learning sets' Communication networks
NSW	NSW Department of School Education; NSW TAFE Commission; Bradfield College	Statewide	Inclusion of accredited VET training in retail in Years 11 and 12 of school sector	Schools	Two-day orientation program Four-day development program, including how to deliver entry-level skills Two five-day structured work placements Certification by State Committee
Victoria	Eastern Institute of TAFE	Organisational	Flexible delivery strategies for small business training	TAFE	Two-day staff development workshop Use of specifically designed PD resources as follow-up
Victoria	Western Metropolitan Institute of TAFE	Departmental (wholesale/retail services)	Cultural change from classroom-based teaching to flexible, client-based consulting	TAFE	All staff completed workplace assessor training Staff assessing own skills, developing own PD plans Some staff completing university qualifications Action-learning and mentoring Team-based approach
SA	Para Institute of TAFE	Organisational	Broadened access to IT for TAFE staff, students and local community	TAFE	Action-learning groups Mentoring network of staff Internet and email training
SA	Murray Institute of TAFE; Orlando Wines	Organisational	Introduction of the Frontline Management Initiative (FMI) at Orlando Wines	Enter-prise and TAFE	Key staff completed workplace assessor training, passed on skills to others System of module advisors Visit of UK expert Formal and informal PD activities

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WA	CY O'Connor Regional College of TAFE	Regional	Change to open learning, flexible delivery to service a large region (approx. the size of Victoria)	TAFE	Institutional planning Performance management system Planning and skills development in open learning/flexible delivery Team development programs
WA	Adult Migrant Education Service (comprising four centres)	Organisational	Change in language delivery from needs-based to competency-based approach	TAFE	Coordinated by PD Unit, key staff formally trained interstate Three-day session on CBT, then trained other staff Action-learning strategies

An interview schedule (see Appendix) was developed to collect data from a range of participants at each site in order to obtain multiple perspectives on the change implementation. These participants were to include, if possible, the key initiator of the change, those affected by the change, a team leader or departmental manager and the person in the organisation responsible for PD. Telephone contact was made with each of the 10 sites, firstly, to secure approval for their inclusion and to brief them on the project, and secondly, to organise the specific details of the interviews. All the interviews were undertaken during site visits around mid-June. Six interviewers, all fully briefed on the project, conducted the interviews in five States: Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. The interviewers used either audiotapes or their own notes to give a short summary of each case study. These case studies appear in Volume 2 of this report.

A detailed content analysis was then undertaken on the group of case study summaries. The findings are presented here. For reader convenience, (abbreviated) names of the 10 sites rather than specific departments or programs are presented. It needs to be recognised that other components of an organisation might display different features.

The report is concerned with change processes in the implementation of VET objectives and the role of PD in supporting those change processes. Its structure focusses first on the changes and then on the PD components under the following headings:

- the changes;
- planning and implementing the changes;
- planning and implementing the PD components; and
- the outcomes and the role of PD.

The report concludes by drawing on the lessons learnt about the change process and the strategic use of PD in effecting change within the VET sector.

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The changes

Four of the changes were related to various aspects of flexible delivery in engineering, accounting and book-keeping, small business, and at one institute across four main areas comprising landcare, agribusiness, human services, and business and information technology. The other changes were concerned with retail training in the school sector, recognition of prior learning in SkillShare providers, cultural shift from classroom teaching to consultancy services, frontline management in TAFE and industry, broadened access to information technology services and competency-based training and assessment in languages.

These changes were variously labelled by interviewers or implementers as 'radical ... and a major cultural change' (Western), 'enormous' (Cooloola), 'dramatic and [involving] every person in the institution' (both WA sites), 'innovative' (Para) and 'a very significant change' (AMES, NSW Department of School Education).

Planning and implementing the changes

A significant contextual feature of these changes is that they were conceived and planned in a strong national climate of change. They were also being implemented at the same time as other major changes were influencing the workplace, such as enterprise bargaining, restructuring, workplace agreements, privatisation, corporatisation, competency-based training and work placement demands.

Another key feature, not unrelated to the first, is that most of the changes were reactive and responsive in character. For example, the desire for efficiency in learning resources across a multi-campus institution (Lorraine Martin); the need to provide services and products to all learners in the region, including distant ones (CY O'Connor); the need to have accredited courses to be eligible for government funding under competitive funding arrangements (AMES); or the intention to prepare school students more adequately for the world of work rather than for university studies (NSW Department of School Education). The notable exception was at Murray, where the initiative to equip people with Frontline Management Initiative (FMI) skills was proactive and undertaken far in advance of implementation in any specific context.

The press of the national training reform agenda, in particular, was singled out as the key general influence, with its emphases of an open training market, increased training in the workplace, the requirement for training to be accredited and demand for responsiveness of institutional providers to client needs in the increasingly industry-driven system. As one interviewer said, there were many pressures being imposed on institutions 'by a range of complex context imperatives'. Such a political context manifested itself at the institutional level in a number of ways. These included the declining student demand for courses, more commercial and business-like operations

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in provider institutions, the urgent need to be more market-responsive and the desires for reduced student attrition, for more efficient provision or a market edge.

Sometimes the change came about as a result of vision (Western) or an ability to 'read the signs of the times' (Murray). Sometimes it was a result of frustration (as in the case of Para, Cooloola and Lorraine Martin). Sometimes it was catalysed from within by a management initiative, while in other cases it was from an external request (e.g., from the Office for Training and Further Education to Eastern, or from the NSW State Government to its Department of School Education). Sometimes it was from a sense of direction gained from or supported by research (e.g., the Karpin Report at Murray or an un-named report at Eastern). The restructuring of institutions also played a role in bringing about change (as in the case of CY O'Connor formed from five TAFE centres in a region). The initiative usually came from the government minister, the organisation's Director/CEO, the departmental head, program leader or senior management group.

While the initiative for change was almost always reactive, what is significant is that planning for change in most cases was deliberate. Strategies were put in place over varying timeframes, although sometimes perceptions differed on whether this planning was 'a formally planned event' or 'a more *ad hoc*, 'rushed' series of events' (both descriptions used at Cooloola). The planning process was variously characterised as 'deliberate' (Lorraine Martin, SkillShare), 'evolutionary and growing' (Western), or 'incremental and iterative' (Para).

While little, if any, documentation of the planning processes was maintained, a significant feature of the changes is that they were bordered with relatively clearly defined parameters. Those to be affected by the changes was identified (Lorraine Martin, Para), the training strategy delineated (Lorraine Martin, NSW Department of School Education), a change agent(s) singled out (Lorraine Martin, Eastern, Western, Para), a planning timeframe settled (Cooloola, Eastern, SkillShare, Lorraine Martin) and required resources mapped (Para).

The planning strategies for introducing change varied markedly, from the formal to the informal. The range included:

- organisation of physical facilities (Cooloola, Para) or the marshalling of equipment (Para);
- selection and recruitment of catalyst teaching personnel (Para);
- inculcation of attitudinal change through promotion of on-site industrial training as an important role for teaching staff (Cooloola);
- development of customised learning resources as a major vehicle for flexible delivery (Eastern, Lorraine Martin, Cooloola);
- a system of mentoring and action-learning (Western, Para)
- 'loosely coupled teams' in a matrix structure (CY O'Connor);

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- use of formal initiatives to support changes in delivery and work procedures, such as Quality Endorsed Training Organisation (QETO) for developing the processes, Investing in People (IiP) for developing the people and ISO 9001 for developing the product (CY O'Connor);
- policies and procedures (SkillShare); and
- curriculum development (NSW Department of School Education).

An important facet of planning for change is the anticipation of difficulties and the establishment of strategies for overcoming any difficulties should they arise. These difficulties tended to be context-specific. However, common concerns included time, resources, potential administrative barriers and especially variations in motivation, including outright resistance from staff. All organisations variously incorporated PD in their planning processes to address these anticipated difficulties.

The processes of implementation of the changes in these case studies led to considerable shifts, in many ways unexpected in their magnitude, in teachers' work organisation. After-hours teaching, methods of training, travel, work locations, impact of technology, student timetabling, handling learners with varying RPL all resulted in changes to traditional employment conditions. In the views of Western staff, who changed from 'teachers into consultants over a period of 2 to 3 years', such changes and the opportunities to grow and achieve were perceived as an 'appropriate offset to changed working hours and traditional holiday periods'.

Given these radical changes, it may not be entirely unexpected that considerable initial resistance was widely reported. At Cooloola, staff became frustrated 'at a job half done' and experienced professional fatigue, mainly attributed to insufficient time and resources. Some teachers at Eastern, CY O'Connor and AMES could not accommodate the changes relating to new training directions. They also expressed disagreement with certain principles of the national training reform agenda or were unwilling to move away from tried and tested methods of teaching. Difficulties with technology and lack of computer literacy or access to hardware were reported at Eastern and Para. Concerns about participating in the frontline management program at Murray were also reported.

Sometimes teacher concerns were articulated in terms of adverse effects on students (AMES, CY O'Connor). In the NSW Department of School Education, the initial PD program was 'dogged by scepticism and doubt by both TAFE and secondary schoolteachers' and the scheme for retail training in schools met with resistance from some employers. There was some initial tension also created at Eastern between teaching and non-teaching staff from business and industry. Resistance to change at CY O'Connor was greater than anticipated from teachers who were not seeing 'the big picture', were confused about what they perceived to be irrelevant emphases on achieving QETO and ISO 9001, became frustrated with processes of team work and

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said that all they wanted was 'help to get on with the job!'. In the end, the effectiveness of the team-building emphasis was evident from the favourable comments of staff.

Planning and implementing the PD components

Analysis of these case studies reveals that PD was usually designed for three reasons:

- to create an awareness of the need and importance of the proposed change;
- to provide required specialist skills; and
- to foster commitment to implementing the change.

Therefore, PD comprised varying mixes of knowledge, skill and attitude elements. Attitude was seen as particularly important because PD was designed to develop teamwork and shared ownership. At Lorraine Martin, while staff displayed reservations about the changes initially, PD helped them to reach a situation where 'they all pitched in and made it work'. Similarly at Eastern, the 'very deliberately planned and tailored PD component, integral to the success of the change process, helped overcome resistance and inexperience'. Western's PD program was designed to change 'a core staff from a largely trade-based background into 'teachers who train' by a five-part process'. The PD program for re-training New South Wales' schoolteachers was 'highly planned and structured' and at Murray it was a 'planned and targeted activity'.

The primary focus of PD activities was the teaching/training staff. However, there were occasionally others involved. At Lorraine Martin, for example, included with the commerce teachers were some relevant administration staff. Managers of SkillShare associations were also invited (though only one attended) to an orientation session in the Hunter Region and Principals of highschools in New South Wales were kept up-to-date on VET developments in schools.

The PD components were comprised of different elements. Sessions were a common approach, particularly for orientation and awareness-raising activities. A 2-day staff development workshop was established at Eastern, initially with special funds but then as a fee-for-service enterprise. Re-training of schoolteachers in New South Wales was by a 2-day orientation program, a 4-day skill and knowledge development program and 10 days of structured work placement. CY O'Connor staff, in a 'comparatively *ad hoc* process', participated in any of the various PD courses conducted in the VET sector generally, as well as in specific team development courses.

Other institutions used outside experts. Sometimes these were found within the same State—a TAFE curriculum consortium manager supported the change to flexible delivery and an industry focus at Cooloola on the basis of the 'modelling' potential for other places. At other times they were identified interstate. For the AMES change, two Western Australian senior staff went to New South Wales to attend formal training; from Murray, key staff in South Australia completed workplace assessor training in

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Victoria and then passed these skills on to others; and in the NSW SkillShare network, presenters came from Tasmania and Victoria. In one case, a visiting expert from the United Kingdom was used (Murray and other SA TAFE institutes). Visits to other organisations were also used in some cases, such as when Cooloola staff visited flexible delivery operations in South Australia.

Systems of mentoring and AL seemed a particularly effective means of PD, especially when it involved cultural shifts. At Western, the department Head spent about half of each working day discussing issues and coaching staff in new roles, providing leadership and support with 'considerable success'. The teachers worked as teams on individual projects. Normal departmental resources were allocated for the PD activities and the teachers were all involved in allocating the funds and time for these activities. At Para, a network of staff provided PD support for other staff as needs arose. A 6-month AL PD program for trainers was established in SkillShare, consisting of three 'learning sets' with five to six members in each set; while at Lorraine Martin, a team approach was created for both the development of learning resources and the development of teachers' skills to use the learning resources. In at least one instance (CY O'Connor), PD was directly linked to the Performance Management System. In the case of schoolteacher re-training in New South Wales, RPL was available to cater for the differing levels of preparation and experience of the participants. In addition, successful completion of the PD program led to receipt of a formal Certificate of Eligibility issued by the VET in Schools State Committee.

Other resources for PD included the development of specially tailored materials. A staff development kit at Eastern was specially designed for workshop use and subsequent follow-up, and consisted of a trainer's guide and a participant's manual. SkillShare developed a kit to support other trainers in acquiring skill and experience with RPL.

A significant feature of PD delivery in several cases was the use of a cascading approach. At Para, a network of staff was formed to provide support to other staff as their needs were identified. Their intention was to integrate PD into staff's thinking. At AMES, staff participated in a 3-day training session, then provided training to colleagues. Similarly, the piloting of new procedures was undertaken in a staged process across three terms so that staff could observe CBT in Action and develop a feeling of involvement in the change. Graduates of the PD program for the network of SkillShare providers were able to train other staff in RPL and facilitate implementation of RPL policy and practice within their own provider. An exception to the deliberately planned examples was the approach taken at Western. This involved 'little formal planning for PD activities' because staff are encouraged to make their own decisions about their work—all had completed workplace assessor training and some were completing formal studies at universities.

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Likely difficulties in implementing change were anticipated in the PD activities and were handled in different ways. Special funds, accessed from an external body, were obtained to assist the SkillShare PD program, particularly to involve staff dispersed over a wide geographical area. Staff resistance was addressed in ways already described, starting with orientation sessions in most cases (e.g., at Eastern).

There were reported cases, however, of under-estimation of PD for others not so immediately involved in the changes as the teachers. This was particularly critical in the examples of system-wide change. For example, in both the SkillShare and Department of School Education cases, the teachers/trainers experienced serious implementation difficulties on returning to their local institutions. This was due to their managers/principals 'back-home' not being sufficiently aware and supportive of the change. The situation was described as being very frustrating for teachers and trainers because managers were not seen to be sharing the vision.

Also under-estimated was the amount of time and effort required in PD. One of the managers at Cooloola exclaimed, 'What surprised me was how hard we had to work initially'. The time taken for staff to appreciate the strategic view and see the benefits of change was 'far greater than anticipated'. At Lorraine Martin, the chief concern was the pressure on one individual—the change agent who was the Head of Commerce. Staff at the SkillShares also spoke about not being aware of how much time was required, and the majority of the time was provided on a voluntary basis.

One of the most interesting observations about these PD programs is the value of building on previous experience. A track record enables institutions to implement change and accompanying PD as a natural progression from what had been happening previously. The SkillShare network had tasted success with AL approaches and strategies used in an earlier CBT in Action program. At CY O'Connor, 'new ground had already been broken' through a special unit providing some courses via flexible delivery. Therefore, the challenge of enabling all study areas to adopt, modify and utilise further innovative approaches to deliver training to distant clients was a broadening or an extension of what had occurred previously.

Murray, in planning the introduction of the FMIat Orlando Wines, had the advantage of 3 years of various PD activities of this same initiative across TAFE. This had provided 'a good track record', a sound foundation on which to build this initiative within an enterprise. Murray's use of PD was actually quite different from other institutions where there were specifically tailored programs. It was carried out without any particular initiative in mind and was generated to support a range of changes within the management program. These changes were all derived from the Karpin Report and other government initiatives related to training in the VET sector. The introduction of the FMI into Orlando Wines was merely one of the activities to benefit from this PD strategy.

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A significant ingredient in several of the PD programs, particularly evident in the AL sets, was the latitude for participants to 'own' aspects of their program. For example, in SkillShare the managers of the PD set the overall framework and resources for the PD, but participants planned the sequence of their programs, determined the program details and identified their own particular resource needs. The PD operated as 'a locally devised, action-learning process'. Such freedom led to a high level of 'ownership' of the PD process and its products by the participants. At Western, teachers work as teams on individual projects and are effectively team leaders, recruiting sessional staff, planning, liaising with clients and mentoring each other.

An interesting characteristic of PD is its degree of visibility/invisibility. Many of the PD activities were very visible, such as workshops, special development materials and work placements. However, there were other interesting examples of more hidden activity. At CY O'Connor, for instance, many of those now working in teams did not see the link between the teams and PD, or if it was seen it was not understood. At Para, the PD that occurred as information technology access was broadened and an intranet introduced within the institution was 'almost unseen' and led to PD activity being described by staff as *ad hoc*. A particularly strong and durable perception of PD as something intimately related to participation in courses of varying duration appeared in these cases.

Change outcomes and the role of PD

Achievement of objectives

The changes were largely successful in terms of objectives being achieved to varying degrees. Some of the different criteria for success implied in the case study descriptions included:

- increases in business;
- major changes in teaching practice;
- resources development;
- well-designed curriculum units and PD programs;
- positive inter-sectoral relationships;
- renewed professional esteem for teachers;
- timetabling to facilitate greater user-choice or provision of alternative pathways for students; and
- the process itself.

Participants reported many important outcomes as a result of these changes. Increased business and an expanded range of courses on offer have been witnessed by many organisations. For example, Cooloola reported 'a significant turn-around', in which the increase in business amounted to an increase of over 30% in student contact hours. At

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Eastern, there was increased institutional capacity to deliver flexibly accredited training to small business, a broadening of marketing activities through the sale of products and the publishing generated profits which were ploughed back into the institution for further growth and development. At this institute, the outcome described as of greatest significance was the shift in thinking and training delivery across the institute, where 2–5% of total student contact hours (approximately 40 000) must now be delivered in the workplace. Similarly, at Western, change brought increased training activity, new clients and repeat business. Lorraine Martin experienced a 'greater throughput of students [with] improved student satisfaction'.

Other outcomes were in the form of products and services. Para developed short- and long-term information technology plans for the institute. Quality learning materials, especially for flexible delivery, were produced by a number of organisations (Cooloola, Eastern, Lorraine Martin). These materials allowed students to dictate the pace and depth of their study, led to improved student satisfaction and furnished better training product for the institution across various campuses (Lorraine Martin). The SkillShare centres generally found that the opportunity to provide RPL enabled them, despite some patchiness in implementation, to expand their services to support, encourage and develop job seekers. Accredited retail training programs were introduced successfully in NSW schools, providing students not going to university with choices in vocational studies and experience within the Higher School Certificate. In several organisations, major changes in teaching practice occurred, in particular towards the use of resource-based teaching (for example at Cooloola). In addition, timetabling changes to facilitate greater user choice (Eastern) or provision of alternative pathways for students (NSW Department of School Education) were other benefits. Improved inter-sectoral relationships were also outcomes from many of the changes; for example, with industry (Cooloola, Western) and between a number of vested interests involved with schoolteacher re-training in New South Wales. At Para, the very process of change was considered an important outcome; the process of AL was described as 'very stimulating' compared with passive seminars and its 'social aspects' were also mentioned as real benefits.

Rewards and recognition were also important outcomes for some organisations. For example, the introduction of an Internet Café at Para was labelled a success and won an ANTA Best Practice Award. Again, CY O'Connor met QETO standards in 1996 and expects to achieve ISO 9001 and IiP status during 1997. It believes the public image of the institute has improved over the 3 years of change, with it now perceived as a quality organisation capable of providing training anywhere in its catchment area. As a result of change at Eastern, the Business Enterprise Centre has become well-known throughout Australia and in 1995 was a shortlisted finalist entry in the Australian Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing. Western is recognised in Victoria and interstate 'as a model for achieving the culture change necessary in TAFE in the 1990s'.

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In any change process, not everything goes to plan. There were also some very interesting unintended consequences from change. At Cooloola, the experience of this change led to the development of a documented PD plan in support of change activities, a strategy aimed at increasing the strategic awareness of staff and providing more realistic timelines for implementing change. At Eastern, change brought an unexpected high retention and significant increase in Business Enterprise Centre staff, from six to a pool of 20–25 staff. It also brought healthy financial growth with a steady increase in funded student contact hours. Lorraine Martin found that, in the process of moving towards flexible delivery, 'an important spin-off ... has been the enhancement of the Commerce Department teachers as a team operation and their perceived personal/professional growth'.

The most unexpected outcome came from Lorraine Martin, where the new flexible environment was exploited by overseas students (who make up half the number of students) seeking to extend their study time at the college. Apparently, this was quickly overcome with appropriate student counselling. Other less unexpected problems were the time required by participants (SkillShare), the cost and the increased numbers involved in the change (Murray). In particular, the time and resources planned or expected in effecting change were invariably under-estimated.

In these case studies, there were also several examples of incomplete change. At AMES, some teachers continue to have reservations about the change to CBT in language teaching (success in this case was judged by full participation of teachers in the certificate and no resignations due to the change). Stress on Cooloola management and key staff remains an issue to be addressed, and key members of the teacher catalyst group experience some frustration 'at a job half done' as a result of insufficient time and, ultimately, resources. Online delivery at Eastern is still to happen and other projects are evolving. Change at Murray is only just beginning and new teacher skills are yet to be developed in forthcoming PD activities. Implementation of RPL was patchy within the SkillShare network. In the NSW Department of School Education case study, the expansion of VET in schools has not reached the numbers anticipated, due to a multiplicity of factors. These include the less 'glamorous' image of retail compared with some other areas, the lack of challenge in relatively low-level curricula, inadequate resourcing within schools and reduced political support.

A significant observation emerging from these analyses is that (individual) human outcomes are often considered less frequently and less visibly and as less important than other types of outcomes. For instance, at Cooloola the 'perceived increase in confidence in 'taking on new things' was classified as an unintended outcome, evidently secondary to the introduction of flexible delivery within engineering. Similarly, at Western, outcomes of the change from teaching to consulting were enumerated in terms of departmental and institutional benefits. The benefits to individual staff were acknowledged to have been 'not intended as outcomes' and yet 'integral in providing the motivation for staff to change'. The need for a change in

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teacher mindset, apart from the intended outcome of skills development such as workplace assessment, was reported to have only 'become apparent to the manager over time'.

Perhaps this under-emphasis on recognition of effects on individual staff goes a long way towards explaining the human costs that were reported as a consequence of implementing change. Outcomes were 'bought at a cost' at Cooloola; the resultant 'professional fatigue' and stress on management and key staff in most cases lingered on after the change. It became a festering issue requiring attention and needing to be addressed more adequately in future change attempts. At Lorraine Martin, there was considerable concern for the degree of pressure placed on one individual (the change agent), through the 'successful but pressured implementation phase'. Pressures on staff at Eastern's BEC have included increased workloads, after-hours work, increased responsibilities on sessional staff and the need to deal with different types of industrial issues. Staff at CY O'Connor acknowledged that the past 3 years had been difficult. Many SkillShare staff were very frustrated, feeling that their skills were highly developed as a result of the PD but were under-utilised and under-valued within their training centres as a consequence of limited understanding and support from their managers.

Outweighing these human costs, however, was the re-invigoration of involved VET staff. If the old adage that an institution's most valuable resource is its staff has increasing currency in this modern era, then this outcome is no mean feat. Even if there had been no other outcome—and there were indeed many—then this re-invigoration outcome has been worth the effort. The combined spin-off of all these changes has been a very significant PD outcome in itself, let alone the specific PD activities within each organisation which have the express purpose of facilitating a particular change within each site. This effect on staff was articulated in various ways at each of the sites.

At Western, teaching staff changed from 'teachers' into 'consultants' over 2–3 years. They have become multi-skilled consultants who are now involved in marketing, planning, staffing and managing their projects as well as teaching individual modules, mainly away from campus in clients' premises. Staff are reported to be enthusiastic and to have embraced this change, to have gained considerable self-esteem as well as a strong sense of achievement, pride and job satisfaction. At Cooloola, there was considerable up-skilling of engineering staff in the use of resource-based teaching techniques, while at Para, there was evidence of more frequent use of information technology by staff and of staff changing their outlook to think internationally. Murray recognised that 'a change in teacher mindset' needed to occur alongside any skills development such as the ability to conduct workplace assessments. For example, new skills in consultation and liaison with industry, ethics and protocols for working within industry were required. CY O'Connor staff feel satisfied with their position in the organisation, enjoy working in teams and feel that their contributions to those teams are valued. The retail training for the NSW schoolteachers was reported to have

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provided 'renewal opportunities' for them. Apart from a new teaching area, almost one-third have enrolled in advanced retail courses within TAFE as part of their personal commitment to PD.

Renewed professional esteem for teachers came from on-site industry experiences (Cooloola, NSW Department of School Education), or in developing and using new skills and knowledge (Western), or as competent staff able to train other staff (SkillShare, Para). As one teacher expressed it, she 'could not function as just a classroom teacher now'—the changing of work conditions had generated a 'challenging and satisfying job'.

Role of PD in supporting change

The role of PD in the effective implementation of change was seen as vital. In supporting change at these case study sites, PD was variously labelled as 'integral' (Lorraine Martin), 'central' (Eastern), 'pivotal' (NSW Department of School Education) and 'critical' (Cooloola, SkillShare) to the success of the change initiative. At Lorraine Martin, PD was integral to the change in that it was used both to up-skill teaching staff and to refine learning materials. Eastern found that PD encouraged networking with other institutes and providers, injected new and lateral thinking, facilitated exchange of information, personal growth, curriculum and technological development and a sense of ownership. Interviewees at Eastern claimed that PD must come at the right time, be involving and an integral part of the change process, be on-going and continuously cater for new staff.

The PD program for the NSW schoolteachers was reported as 'pivotal to the successful introduction of VET in schools'. Managers and teachers at Cooloola considered that without PD professional and team support would have been seriously lacking and the likely outcome only limited resource development and changed delivery practices. On reflection, they believed that the role of PD in supporting change 'had to be given greater prominence—particularly at the level of team involvement in the management of the change process'. It was considered essential not just for teachers but also for students and clients. PD within SkillShare had the primary purpose of up-skilling staff and developing a manual; the latter in particular was judged a 'key tangible outcome, critical to the primary objective of implementing RPL within the network'. The verdict was that it was doubtful whether their VET objective would have been achieved without PD.

These statements from participants underline the critical importance of PD as a general supporter of change. More specifically, PD can be perceived as playing a number of roles. Most immediately and visibly, it serves as an information dispenser and skills developer. It builds knowledge about a particular change and equips relevant staff with the specific skills required for implementation of that change. For example, staff learnt

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about being consultants, about how to develop learning guides or about how to implement RPL procedures or competency-based training and assessment.

In addition to this training function, PD also acted as a barometer for change implementation. PD provided the feedback to allow necessary adjustments to be made to the change itself. At Eastern, funding of student contact hours had to be reconsidered and eventually broken down to a project basis, and staff numbers and allocation needed attention. This feedback also enabled needs not initially understood to be clarified and shifts made. At Para, the 'PD needs seemed to emerge naturally ... often in a fairly immediate way'; for example, when a staff member tried to log onto email, encountered difficulties and was provided with help, this was considered a PD event. The staff member was able to access required knowledge and skills from a colleague at the point and time of need.

PD also served as a kickstart ... Major mind-shifts often have to occur prior to progress towards any change (Cooloola, AMES). People also respond to change at different rates. PD activities were used to confirm those who were ready to act and who could pilot change (AMES).

It also acted as a safety valve. PD activities were used to attend to major anxieties and concerns felt by individuals before change began. Cultural shifts and moves out of comfort zones can be a very stressful, as many institutions discovered (e.g. AMES, Cooloola).

PD can also be used as an identifier, singling out latent talents and abilities in staff, who can be co-opted or released to carry out particular tasks in a change management process. For example, at AMES, a teacher was co-opted to refine assessment tasks developed by colleagues, and her role was considered 'a vital element in the successful implementation of the Certificates in Spoken and Written English'. In SkillShare, it also provided a means of tapping into talents and energies—staff 'were doing, not just being told' and, in consequence, 'thrived on the process'.

Very importantly, PD served as a team builder, helping to create and maintain climates conducive to change. At Eastern, the positive outcomes were claimed to be 'assisted by the PD component and the sense of ownership engendered by the staff's active involvement in the change development'. 'Tailored PD' was reported as an important factor in their success. The development of a close and supportive team at Western assisted staff in achieving their goals and was 'seen as being essential to the success of any similar program'. The teachers at Lorraine Martin also 'spoke warmly of the team-based approach to both the change and the PD'.

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What can we learn about the change process?

These case studies are examples of effective change implementation. All involved significant cultural change. What, then, can we learn from these sites about the change process in implementing VET objectives?

The following five factors emerged from analysis of these case studies as key factors in the change process:

1 'Right person' as catalyst/change agent

This is a critical factor. Having the 'right person' as the change agent to catalyse change is essential. Some of the attributes for such a person include entrepreneurial flair, technical expertise, education and training vision, team process skills, strong leadership skills, ability to provide a sound rationale for change and to make the change seem achievable and realistic to others. This person needs to have a clear notion of the parameters of the required change and the ability to make them clearly understood to others. This also requires an excellent understanding of their audience. Often this person is an expert staff member taken off-line (with committee support from others) and dedicated to the task.

2 Willing others with a shared vision

'Others' includes managers and staff. Features of management that were perceived as important included clear philosophy, a hands-off style allowing staff to have autonomy to manage, visible and constant support, a clear idea of the outcome so that 'authentic support' can be provided, infectious commitment and a shared vision. Change also requires other staff sharing the vision. They need to be willing to take 'a leap of faith', adapt their working conditions, change their traditional ways of working, step outside comfort zones and assume responsibility. They require skills in consultation, communication and self-management, and to exhibit open-mindedness and flexibility.

3 Adequate resources

Change in almost every case took longer than implementers had planned. Objectives were only met with staff contributing much of their own time to making the changes work. Many declared that implementing change was harder work than they had ever thought. Furthermore, many of the changes required external financial assistance. It is essential that realistic timelines and sufficient finances are allowed in order to bring about effective change.

4 Supportive environment

The early establishment and careful maintenance of a supportive environment is a central factor in facilitating change. Such an environment promotes change as a 'natural

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progression' and not a 'quantum leap'. Some important ingredients in an environment like this include:

- previous experience in related change, where 'some ground has already been broken', is very helpful in that it provides a sound foundation on which to build new initiatives;
- permission for staff to make decisions and mistakes in a non-threatening environment empowers them;
- emotional support to staff, which may include counselling, to help them adjust to change;
- open lines of communication at all levels allowing ideas to be spread across an organisation and helping to prevent creation of 'haves' and 'have-nots' which can lead to professional jealousies;
- changes seen as potential models for other places are helpful and provide motivation—experience gained can be used in a range of contexts;
- close match between institutional ethos and the nature of the change can be helpful;
- firm belief in underlying philosophy and benefits helps provide direction, commitment and motivation;
- an atmosphere of change is conducive to innovation—it may come through such factors as organisational restructuring, a tradition of being responsive to markets at short notice, or a sense of necessity for change to survive as an organisation competing in the open training market;
- regular and systematic monitoring of the effects of change;
- a system to provide enterprising staff with a variety of forms of reward/recognition (money, time, prestigious or satisfying tasks); and
- involvement of all main players in the design and planning of key elements, preferably through a team approach.

5 Professional development

PD was considered a very important factor in the change process in all case studies, fulfilling many roles and contributing to the effective implementation of each change. The next section further examines the PD factor.

What can we learn about the strategic use of PD?

The general feedback from sites was that change would not have been possible, or certainly not as effective, without the accompanying PD. Some sites may have underestimated or missed particular aspects such as resources, time or local manager awareness. However, in all cases there was the realisation that PD was a fundamental

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ingredient in the change process. What, then, can we learn about PD and its strategic use in facilitating change in the VET sector?

Types of PD

Three important dimensions to PD can be identified from the analyses of these case studies. These dimensions are not discrete, but are in many respects inter-related. They help to disentangle and clarify various facets of PD that may or may not be appropriate in particular contexts.

Firstly, PD may be integrated or separated. Integrated PD is woven into the fabric of the normal working life of a department or organisation, where PD is viewed as authentic work activity and valued as 'real work'. It is somewhat invisible, being relatively indistinguishable from regular work activity, it is on-the-job and continuous, and it is melded into the normal processes of continuous improvement. Separated PD, on the other hand, typically involves special workshops and other similar types of activity. It tends to be off-the-job, and normally, though not exclusively, timed prior to tasks rather than during them. By definition, it is discrete and divorced physically from regular work activity.

Secondly, PD may be perceived as a group responsibility or an individual responsibility. PD may be organised for or by an identified group who is seen to be integral to a proposed change. All members of that group have a responsibility to participate. Such activities tend to be relatively formal, planned and structured. Alternatively, PD may be left to individuals as their own responsibility. Development may be in-house or it may occur elsewhere, such as at a university. The organisation hosting the change plays much less of a role in the specific direction and provision of the PD.

Thirdly, PD may be tailored or generic. In this study, most of the examples were tailored and this characteristic was deemed one of the main factors in its success. Tailored PD is deliberately structured for a specific purpose and with a particular audience in mind. Generic PD is more general development for more general trends. It relies on the ability to read the environmental signs, think strategically and answer such questions as 'How do we develop people for this changed environment?', rather than 'What specific development is required for this particular innovation?'.

From these different dimensions, then, we can construct four main types of PD that have been employed by VET managers in the case studies selected for analysis in this study. Each type has been judged by site participants as effective within the context in which it was employed. The decision regarding which to use in any particular context will depend on such factors as the context in which the change is to be made, the nature of the change, the resources available and the preferences of the change agent(s).

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Just-as-planned

Example:

The Managing Director of CY O'Connor had a well-prepared plan for change, and, as a result, PD was targeted mainly at developing skills that would enable people to function effectively in teams.

Possible advantages:

- structured in advance;
- others can know what is to happen;
- potential problems may be anticipated; and
- costs can be anticipated.

Possible disadvantages:

- may be ill-timed and therefore not strategic;
- may not meet needs-of-the-time;
- can be locked in too far in advance;
- may be inflexible; and
- may not be 'owned' by staff.

Just-in-case

Example:

At Murray, PD for moving people out of the classroom and preparing them to deliver training in workplaces was the critical key change. This was prepared for well in advance of a specific initiative and was derived from a critical awareness of key trends and emerging issues in policy development within the VET sector.

Possible advantages:

- a natural progression, not a quantum leap to a new change; and
- people prepared in advance.

Possible disadvantages:

- may not be what is required, or out of date, when the need for a change arrives;
- staff can relocate and therefore are not be available when eventually needed; and
- can be inefficient.

Just-in-time

Example:

Para established a network of staff to provide PD support to other staff as they identified their need for such development. This often occurred in a fairly immediate way, where a staff member was able to access required knowledge and skill from a colleague at the point and time of need.

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Possible advantages:

- meets immediate need at the place and time required;
- is very efficient;
- is flexible; and
- assistance is individualised.

Possible disadvantages:

- there is a need for PD mentor to be at hand when required;
- can be utilised disproportionately or monopolised by some; and
- those wanting assistance can be left waiting if PD is devolved down to the workers and they have other tasks at hand.

Just-as-you-decide

Example:

This model was in evidence at Western where no formal planning documents were produced. There is little formal planning for PD as staff are empowered to make their own decisions about all aspects of their work. It can also be seen at CY O'Connor in the initial stages, when staff could nominate themselves for various PD courses conducted for people working in the VET sector.

Possible advantages:

- stimulates initiative and self-responsibility;
- good for staff morale to have freedom of choice;
- meets individual need (provided course is directly relevant and sufficiently specific);
- is cheaper for the organisation; and
- less responsibility for management.

Possible disadvantages:

- is not necessarily targeted towards organisational needs; and
- potential to be used by some and ignored by others.

Strategic use of PD

Analysis of these case studies leads to the following conclusions on the strategic use of PD:

- PD needs to be seen as an essential and integral component of effective change.
- PD needs to be inclusive, with all possible stakeholders considered. A 'cascade approach' is a useful way to involve more numbers in PD and build ownership.

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- PD needs to promote team-based approaches, as teams can provide crucial support mechanisms during the stresses and strains of change. PD needs to build on informal networks where they already exist.
- PD needs to be in some way linked with participants' past experiences, with previous knowledge and experience valued and used in the PD process.
- PD needs to be practical and purposeful, relevant to the change and enable participants to feel that they have some ownership/control over the change process.
- PD needs to consider the feelings and attitudes of participants, and value these as equally important as the development of skills and knowledge.
- PD needs to be 'just enough'. Too much PD may lead to boredom, impatience to 'get on with the job' and to being over-prepared with the possibility of insufficient opportunity to utilise the new-found expertise. Too little PD may lead to being under-prepared in knowledge and skill, incomplete commitment to change, frustration, resentment and resistance.
- PD needs to be planned so as to anticipate likely difficulties/inhibitors and specifically to meet them. They should not be glossed over, under-estimated or denied.
- PD needs to recognise that change is stressful and creates pressures for those involved in change as they move outside their comfort zones.
- PD needs to create and foster a supportive and mentoring climate that is conducive to change and will facilitate innovation.

The VET sector is having to respond to massive changes in training reform. Management within training providers—both public and private—has the major responsibility for implementing VET system outcomes. It also needs to consider staff competence and its development as a business strategy, aimed at providing quality training outcomes in a competitive training market. This research has examined cases of such VET policy implementation across five Australian States and various providers, with the aim of informing VET managers and staff of ways in which effective PD can pay off in the effective implementation of policy objectives.

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Appendix
Interview schedule

Opening:
Explain the background and purpose of this interview.

The change/objectives being investigated

1 What was the scope of the change? (e.g. national, State-wide, program-wide, institutional, single course, etc.)

2 What were the purposes/objectives of this change? (clear description needed; preferably obtain any written material)

3 Why was this change initiated? What was its rationale? What was the need?

4 Who was/were the initiator(s) of this change?

Planning for the change

5 Who were planned to be involved in the change?

6 How was the planning for the change undertaken? Over what timeframe?

7 Over what timeframe was the change itself to occur?

8 What were planned as the main elements/strategies in the change process? (e.g. facilities, equipment, learning resources, technology, staffing, etc.)

9 What human resource requirements were planned?

10 How were professional development (PD) needs identified?

11 What problems/difficulties were anticipated? How were these planned for?

Planning for the PD element to support the change

12 Who was to be responsible for the PD element?

13 What was the purpose of the PD? What was intended?

14 Who were the target group(s) for PD?

15 What PD strategies/activities were planned?

16 Over what timeframe was it to take place? (e.g. how many times? when?)

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17 What resources were to be used for PD?

18 What problems/difficulties were anticipated? How were these planned for?

19 How committed were the staff/personnel to the change?

20 How deliberately was the PD element planned?

21 How was PD seen to be linked to other elements/strategies in the change process?

What actually happened in implementing the change?

22 Were there any surprises? What did not go according to plan? Why?

23 What additional things were required? (e.g. people, activities, resources, timetablings, etc.)

24 What worked well? Why?

25 What did not work well? Why?

26 Was the PD sufficient? (e.g. in terms of time, planning, strategies, etc.)

What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element?

27 Were there any surprises? What did not go according to plan? Why?

28 What additional things were required? (e.g. people, activities, resources, timetablings, etc.)

29 What worked well? Why?

30 What did not work well? Why?

The outcomes of the change

31 What were the intended outcomes of this change? (e.g. for individuals, groups, programs, institutions, etc.)

32 What were the unintended outcomes of this change?

33 What do you now think were the pluses and minuses of implementing this change?

Important factors in the process of change

34 Overall, what were the main factors contributing to or inhibiting the success (or otherwise) of this change?

35 What would you say was the impact/importance of PD on the achievement of the change? (extent and depth of this impact?) What evidence is there of this impact?

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36 Were there other outcomes/benefits of the PD element in addition to its contribution to achieving the change? (e.g. personal growth, contribution to further change/objectives)

37 What lessons did you learn in implementing this change, especially concerning PD and the links between PD and other elements in the change process?

38 What (if anything) would you do differently next time?

39 What advice would you now give to others based on your experience of this change and the role of PD in it? (advice particularly for managers?)

40 How generalisable/transferable do you think your example of change and PD activity is within the VET sector? Why/why not?

Closure:
We will send back to you our copy of your case study report. Please correct any inaccuracies, add/delete and make any further comments, then return to Roger Mathers, NCVER.

Thank you for your time.

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Volume 2: Case studies

ROGER HARRIS & MICHELE SIMONS

Introduction

The overall project has researched professional development (PD) in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. Reviews of PD in this sector, undertaken in other phases of this project, have shown that PD is not yet sufficiently appreciated, planned or implemented as a strategic activity.

This phase of the project focuses on cases of VET policy implementation where PD was reported to have been a significant ingredient. The primary emphasis is on the broader change management processes that have included appropriate formal or informal PD strategies in the pursuit of quality training outcomes, rather than on specific PD activities. The research aimed to:

- identify and document cases of VET policy implementation that incorporate the strategic use of PD; and
- advise on management and organisational strategies that incorporate the development of staff and which lead to the provision of quality training services in a decentralised and competitive training market.

The report is designed to inform VET managers and staff of ways in which effective PD can pay-off in the successful implementation of policy objectives. The primary audience is intended to be managers within training providers, with value also for human resource and PD managers, and managers in central agencies in the VET sector.

Volume 1 provides a literature review and detailed analysis of 10 case studies. It is concerned with change processes in the implementation of VET objectives, and the role of PD in supporting those change processes. Volume 2 is the companion volume containing summaries of the 10 case studies. The sites were selected from a list of approximately 25 examples where there were reports of effective VET policy implementation.

An interview schedule (see Appendix of Volume 1, p. 124) was developed to collect data from a range of participants at each site in order to obtain multiple perspectives on the change implementation. These participants were to include, if possible, the key

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initiator of the change, those affected by the change, a team leader or departmental manager, and the person in the organisation responsible for PD. All interviews were undertaken during site visits around mid-June. Six interviewers, all fully briefed on the project, conducted the interviews in five states: Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. The interviewers used either audiotapes or their own notes to summarise each case study. These summaries form the substance of this report.

Change from institution-based to the flexible industry-based delivery of engineering courses at Cooloola Institute of TAFE

The change/objectives being investigated

The Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE (CSIT) is located on Queensland's Sunshine Coast/Cooloola region and is comprised of 14 campuses and institute centres. It represents a regional TAFE institute with a widely distributed client base and a diverse range of training needs to service.

In late 1995, a decision was taken by the institute to encourage the Engineering Section to adopt flexible delivery practices in conducting engineering courses. The reasons for this decision were complex, and included the following ideas.

- Engineering as a discipline within the institute was experiencing stagnant—even declining—student enrolments. This was not a phenomenon unique to Cooloola Sunshine Institute. Other TAFE institutes had already faced the decline in engineering clients and responded by rationalising the engineering delivery. At CSIT, however, a different response strategy was to be employed—the use of flexible delivery to allow for greater delivery customisation and hence the increased saleability of its engineering training product.

- As part of policy initiatives at both the State and Federal level, TAFE institutes were re-organising to operate in a more commercial, business-like fashion. The adoption of flexible delivery program strategies enabled sections to operate more effectively in a business unit mode. It allowed for the growth in client base, together with a more effective use of the section's personnel and budget.

- The need for providing local training solutions for Sunshine Coast industry was seen as being best served by flexible delivery. The primacy of servicing local industry demand was driven by the judgement that this provided the institute's business units with their best possible marketing edge.

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Planning for the change

Planning for the change to flexible delivery was largely undertaken by the institute's executive management. This management team was able to articulate clearly a set of strategies to be put in place over a 12-month period, which would result in the desired shift to flexible delivery for a suite of programs conducted by the engineering team. However, while they were able to demonstrate several key elements of a planned change process, the management team also observed that in practice this was not a formally planned event; rather, it was one which sought to be responsive to the pressures imposed on the institute by a range of complex context imperatives.

The planned change process referenced by the management team included:

- modifications to the physical teaching areas and teaching team's staffrooms in order to facilitate both flexible delivery in terms of teaching practice, and teamwork on the part of participating engineering section staff;
- the selection and recruitment of catalyst teaching personnel to quick-start the transition to flexible delivery;
- the promotion of on-site industry training as an important role for teaching staff; and
- the development of customised learning resources to act as the major vehicle for the flexible delivery of engineering programs.

The teaching staff's recollection of the planning period for the shift to flexible delivery was less focussed. Their sense was of a more *ad hoc* 'rushed' series of events. Nevertheless, each of the planned components identified by management as a strategic perspective was referenced by the various teachers as part of the shift to flexible delivery. This reaction on the part of participating teachers appears a logical one, given the pressured operational role they had to fulfil in actually making the change work.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

The role of PD in supporting the change to flexible delivery was introduced at the initial stages of the change process. There were a number of key individuals involved in the PD role, and their respective interests shaped their PD input in the change event. The personnel involved at that point were:

- a TAFE curriculum consortium manager who supported the change to flexible delivery at Cooloola on the basis of its 'modelling' potential for other operations within the TAFE network;
- the Business Unit manager responsible for engineering who organised key PD activities using a range of professional networks; and

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- key teachers from the engineering section who provided professional education expertise in the materials development necessary for the flexible delivery strategy.

The target group for the PD was the teacher cohort to be involved with the flexible delivery initiative. The purpose of the PD was two-fold: firstly, the creation of 'an awareness about the need to change delivery practices', and secondly, gaining team support and effort to effect the change. The elements identified as part of the PD strategy were:

- awareness/information sessions on flexible delivery conducted by the State Centre for Competency-based Training;
- visits by institute staff to interstate flexible delivery operations at Tea Tree Gully and Taree;
- industry visits; and
- the use of existing key catalyst staff members and the addition of new staff imported to support the change to flexible delivery.

Again, the executive managers viewed the PD in support of flexible delivery as being a deliberate activity if not a particularly formal one.

What actually happened in implementing the changes?

The shift to flexible delivery for courses offered by the engineering section resulted in a significant turnaround of the section's performance profile. Initially, there was an increase in business amounting to an increase of over 30% in student contact hours. Additionally, there was a major change in teaching practice as observed by both management and teaching staff. Other gains were identified in learning resource development, such as positive industry relationships with the college and the renewed professional esteem that teachers gained from on-site industry experiences.

Of major concern to all participants was that these changes had to be accomplished within existing budgetary commitments. This resulted in key members of the teacher catalyst group experiencing frustration at 'a job half done' as necessary resources and facilities are still being produced.

What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element?

'What surprised me was how hard we had to work initially.' This view expressed by one of the executive management team closely associated with the flexible delivery sums up the magnitude of the task undertaken and the time required to affect the shift.

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There have been 'enormous' changes in teaching practice and clients are experiencing flexible delivery options. However, the time taken to implement the changes, in hindsight, has been far greater than initially anticipated.

The outcomes of the change

The change to flexible delivery in the engineering section has resulted in the following intended outcomes:

- increase in section business;
- links with local industry; and
- up-skilling staff in the use of resource-based teaching techniques.

The unintended outcomes of the change have included:

- the move to a documented PD plan in support of change activities. This move is a strategy aimed at increasing the strategic awareness of staff and providing more realistic timelines for implementing change;
- a growth in the range and diversity of program offerings; and
- the perceived increase in confidence in 'taking on new things'.

Important factors in the process of change

The shift to flexible delivery at Cooloola Sunshine Institute's engineering section is viewed as a model for other institute units. The main factors which contributed to the undoubted success of the institute's change to flexible delivery in the engineering program were:

- the commitment by the institute's management team to implement flexible delivery as a strategy for increasing college business and thereby ensuring its future relevance (and resource base);
- the professional skills and commitment of key 'catalyst' teachers to provide professional leadership for other engineering section staff members, and to develop the critical learning-resource materials; and
- the PD elements undertaken in support of the change.

This latter factor (PD) was nominated by both management and teachers as critical to the success of the change initiative. Without the PD opportunities, professional and team support would have been seriously lacking—the likely outcome of which would have been limited resource development and changed delivery practices. On reflection, management and teachers both considered that the role of PD in supporting change had to be given greater prominence—particularly at the level of team involvement in the management of the change process. Teachers also considered that students and

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clients needed PD in working in a flexible delivery environment. As one teacher observed, 'you just can't hand them a module and expect it all to happen.'

Interviewer: Helen Parker

Change to flexible delivery of basic-level accounting and bookkeeping courses at Lorraine Martin College

The change/objectives being investigated

The Lorraine Martin College is currently the largest private provider in Australia with campuses in Brisbane, Cairns and Sydney. It draws its clients in almost equal numbers from the local community and overseas students.

In 1995, it became apparent to both the executive management and teaching staff of the college that the traditional lock-step approach to basic skills training in accounting and bookkeeping was failing to satisfy client needs. From a business perspective, this had commercial implications for the saleability of the college's training product. From a training perspective, it resulted in poorly motivated students and students too frequently failing to complete the basic bookkeeping and accounting courses. Moreover, the broader government training reform agenda were educating clients, staff and competitors in the advantages of flexibly organised and delivered programs.

As a result of this, the director of academic programs and the head of commerce instigated the change to flexible delivery of the basic-level accounting and bookkeeping courses. In summary, the reasons for this shift to flexible delivery include:

- the need to respond to training reform initiatives;
- business imperatives of keeping the college product saleable to clients;
- the potential for greater throughput of clients;
- student motivation; and
- the development of learning resources that supported teaching/learning across several Lorraine Martin College campuses.

Planning for the change

It is acknowledged by both management and teaching staff that the initial shift to flexible delivery was made in a responsive fashion rather than in a formally planned one. However, the nature of the change to flexible delivery, created a change process that was deliberate in its effect. This was due to the need to develop materials and teaching skills over a specific time period and within a specific context.

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The planning for change, therefore, was facilitated by a number of features of both the organisation committing to it and the nature of the change to be affected. In the first place, the Lorraine Martin College has made market responsiveness a priority in its operations; teaching and management personnel are used to taking on new initiatives over a relatively short timeframe on the advice of their marketing unit's research. The highly responsive (rather than the deliberately planned) approach is typical of the college and has often been identified as one of the reasons for its success. It is also important to observe, however, that once an initiative is taken up in this responsive fashion, it is nevertheless refined in a deliberate and iterative manner. The second facilitating aspect to the change to flexible delivery at the college is the defined nature of both the context and the change to be undertaken. From the outset, it was clear to the major initiators of the change that the change was to occur within the following parameters:

- the personnel and program area were unambiguously defined (i.e. commerce teachers and the basic-level accounting and bookkeeping programs); and
- the training strategy targeted for increasing flexibility was the development of print-based, modularised learning resources.

Within these parameters, the college determined that:

- the timeframe for change would be 4–6 months (This was the period when the section was developing materials and transitioning from the earlier lock-step system to the flexible, resource-based approach.); and that
- an expert staff member (with committee support from other teachers) would be taken off-line and would be dedicated to resource materials development.

It was anticipated that difficulties would be encountered in this period. These difficulties were assumed to be: the time pressure on the commerce expert charged with the responsibility of materials development, and the anxiety expressed by teaching staff having to shift from an established teaching context to one characterised by resource-based learning. The college management's anticipatory response to these expected difficulties was to encourage staff activity in the materials development, and to provide senior executive support for the head of commerce who was the expert staff member undertaking the major authoring role.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

The responsibility for PD within the flexible development initiative was again centred upon the head of commerce. This key staff member determined the focus of the PD; that is, commerce and accounting teachers' involvement in, and comfort with, the development of the new teaching resources. The head of commerce also determined the technical PD needs of individual staff members and created a team approach to

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both the development of resources and the development of teachers' skills to use the resources.

The primary target group for identified PD needs was the commerce teachers, with some minor involvement by relevant administration staff. The major focus of the PD was to acquaint the commerce section teachers with the newly developed learning resources. However, given the iterative nature of the PD and the development of flexible delivery resources, the teachers quickly became involved in the materials refinement process itself. PD in this circumstance performed the role of both creating the machinery of flexible delivery and sensitising staff to the new flexible learning environment. The staff initially displayed the anticipated reservations about the changes but quickly committed themselves to the task—'they all pitched in and made it work'.

What actually happened in implementing the changes?

College management and commerce department staff both agree that the shift to flexible delivery has been successfully implemented. The modular learning materials developed by the teachers have resulted in students being able to dictate the pace and depth of their study. This, in turn, led to improved student satisfaction, greater throughput of students and an improved training product for the college. Moreover, the developed learning resources have worked effectively across the various campuses of the college.

If there was any surprise in the new flexible teaching environment, it was the exploitation of timeframes by overseas students seeking to extend their study time at the college. This was quickly overcome by appropriate student counselling.

What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element?

The PD implementation strategy had always been 'commonsense' in approach and held no surprises for staff or management. The teachers spoke warmly of the team-based approach to both the change and PD. They expressed commitment to the now flexible fashion in which their basic skills courses are conducted, and were also able to indicate that the modular approach has allowed them to mix-and-match modules to create a greater number of program choices.

On reflection, both staff and management would prefer to allow more time to bring the learning materials on-line and would seek to pilot these more intensively. The only consistently expressed concern about the change and PD initiatives was the degree of

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pressure placed on one individual—the head of commerce—who wrote the materials and led the team through its successful but pressured implementation phase.

The outcomes of the change

The outcomes of the change in this particular context were captured in the implementation (of both the change and PD) actually delivering what it was set up to (i.e. the conduct of the commerce courses in a flexible fashion by skilled and confident personnel).

Important factors in the process of change

The main factors which contributed to college's flexible delivery success were:

- a clear commitment on the part of college executive management to implement the change;
- the professional and team process skills of the head of commerce; and
- the team skills and educational approach of the commerce department teachers.

The role of PD in implementing the change was critical. It was integral to the change in that it was used both to up-skill the teaching staff and refine the learning materials. An important spin-off from this activity was the enhancement of the commerce department teachers as a team operation and their perceived personal/professional growth.

As mentioned earlier, both teachers and management believe that any future activity of a similar nature should be allocated more time for implementation. It is perceived as an unambiguously transferable model, and the experience gained will be used in other departments and campuses of the college. However, the advice for other managers contemplating such a change is best summed up by a comment from the head of commerce—' (A) ccept change is stressful, involve your staff; and have a belief in the benefits.'

Interviewer: Helen Parker

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Implementation of RPL policy and procedures within the SkillShare network of the Hunter region of NSW

Objectives of the change

In order to satisfy registration requirements of the NSW Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) for the delivery of accredited training, the courses provided by SkillShare training providers were required to include recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes. The objective of the change process was the implementation of consistent RPL policies and procedures across the network of SkillShare providers within the Hunter region of New South Wales. Until this time, RPL arrangements were *ad hoc* and inadequate in terms of VETAB requirement.

Furthermore, the formal accreditation of SkillShare courses would facilitate training pathways with articulation to programs provided by TAFE colleges.

The change was initiated by the chief executive officer VETNET, the coordinating agency of the SkillShares in the Hunter region. Twelve SkillShare associations participated in the change process.

Planning for the change

The manager of VETNET had previously conducted a CBT in Action program across the network, which assisted in the definition of the PD strategy adopted to introduce RPL within the network.

The primary beneficiaries of the change process were the clients of SkillShare training programs—job seekers. The formal recognition of skills and knowledge already acquired would result in no repetition of training.

The employment categories within SkillShare associated with training delivery are managers, training and development coordinators, training and development officers and trainers. The latter two groups were those primarily involved in the change process and the associated PD program.

The primary component of the change strategy was a PD program, with a key outcome being a range of materials for use by individual SkillShares to support the implementation of RPL. The management of VETNET planned the change program, which took approximately 9 months to implement during 1996. The process of implementing RPL within individual providers commenced in 1997 and is on-going.

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In addition to the formal curriculum requirement to introduce improved RPL arrangements, RPL was identified as an issue for staff during the earlier CBT in Action program and through informal liaison with provider staff.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

Management designed and costed the overall PD program and accessed funds from the National Staff Development Committee. The success of the action-learning (AL) approach and strategies used in an earlier CBT in Action program—involving staff from many centres dispersed over a large geographic region—was a significant contributor to defining the PD process. The main problems identified in advance were:

- the need to involve SkillShare management;
- ways to effectively involve staff from many centres dispersed over a wide geographic region; and
- the time required for participants to fully involve themselves in the AL-orientated program.

An orientation session was arranged for the managers. To address the geographical challenge, funds were provided to support extensive travel, telephone, facsimile and tele-conferencing costs, and some release time for staff.

The primary purpose of the PD was to:

- up-skill training staff in RPL; and
- develop consistent RPL policy and procedures through the development of a manual.

The manual was seen as a key tangible outcome, critical to the primary objective of implementing RPL within the network.

The basic plan for PD was an initial planning and information session involving PD participants. Managers of SkillShare associations were invited to this orientation session. This was followed by a 6-month AL program for trainers and consisted of three 'learning sets' with 5–6 members in each set.

- Flexible delivery—development of skills and resources to assist the implementation of more flexible modes of training delivery as a result of trainees being granted RPL and needing a delivery which took into account their 'advanced standing'.

- RPL procedures and manual—the development of specific skills and resources to assist management and trainers to introduce systems and procedures to support RPL.

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- Staff development—the development of a kit to support other trainers developing skills and experience in RPL.

What actually happened to implementing the change?

The products of the PD process—in particular, the forms and procedures associated with the manual—were of immediate value to the process of implementing RPL. Furthermore, the program developed staff, competent in RPL, who were able to train other staff. However, there were some problems associated with the implementation of RPL within SkillShare providers. These included the time taken to undertake the RPL process, the impact on the timetable as trainers adjusted to providing different training activities for trainees given RPL, and limited support from the CES on the impact of RPL on procedures and associated funding arrangements. The destabilisation caused by the change in government policy severely affected the operations of the centres and impacted on the implementation of RPL.

What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element?

The process started with a 2-day initial information and planning session, which included presenters from Tasmania and Victoria who spoke on approaches and resources they had used to introduce RPL. This session produced an overall plan for the PD activity. Groups were formed for each of the three learning sets, facilitators were elected and learning outcomes defined by the participants for their learning set.

While management decided on the overall framework and resources for the PD, participants in each of the three groups were able to plan the sequence of their program, determine program details and identify their own particular resource needs. Each set had learning outcomes that led to the definition of tasks for members. Each member was responsible for developing their own skills in RPL, yet they worked in a cooperative fashion. The PD process was very much a locally devised AL process. Each 'set' had a facilitator, who would define their needs for additional resources and negotiate access to these with the coordinator of the PD initiative. Experience showed that much of the existing material was TAFE-based and not always applicable to the nature of the skills and experience held by SkillShare clients.

The PD program was planned over a 6-month period in 1996. The members of each set met every 2 weeks, alternating between the SkillShare locations of the various members. Periodically, tele-conferences were held and informal telephone meetings took place between individuals. In between the fortnightly meetings, staff would undertake their own research and reading, use the Internet and other resources, and report back to the group. Later in the process, they trialed the introduction of RPL in

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their local centre. Participants who were consulted preferred face-to-face meetings to tele-conferences as they allowed better analysis of work-based issues through direct discussion and white-board work.

Such freedom led to a high level of ownership by the participants of the PD process and its products.

While funds were available to support release time, this was inadequate in terms of the real time required. Discussions with participants interviewed indicated that they were not aware, at the initial orientation session, of the amount of time required. The bulk of the time was provided on a voluntary basis by the participants. However, staff responded to the challenge and were very satisfied with efforts and products. In general, staff participating were very keen. However, mid-way through the PD program, the SkillShare program was drastically restructured. This resulted in the termination of staff, including several of the PD participants. While morale became low, to their credit, all trainers stayed on to complete the program. The PD program provided them with an opportunity to work through some of their personal concerns.

The other factor anticipated as a potential problem was the involvement and commitment of SkillShare management. VETNET management was conscious that SkillShare managers were not sufficiently aware that RPL was not simply an option but a requirement. Although managers were encouraged to participate in the program, only one took up the offer.

The PD program appeared to work very well, with program objectives being achieved. Empowering staff to manage their own learning worked well and 'staff thrived on the process'. It provided a way of tapping into the talents and energies of staff—'they were doing, not just being told'.

During the PD program, participants identified an additional need: how to develop leaning guides in order to provide more flexible delivery options consistent with the provision of RPL. This additional development need was catered for within the program.

The trainers interviewed felt that the manual could have been less wordy and more practical. However, they were satisfied with its value.

The outcomes of the change

The intended outcomes were the achievement of consistent RPL policy and practice within the network through the development of the RPL manual and staff skilled in RPL. This was achieved, with some implementation difficulties being experienced in some centres.

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The time and resource intensiveness of RPL implementation was a real issue for training staff, together with inconsistent understanding and support by management. This made the process of implementation 'difficult and frustrating'. The trainers consulted felt that many staff were very frustrated in their centres. They felt that their skills in RPL were highly developed as a result of the PD, yet were under-utilised and under-valued within their training centres. They expressed concern at the limited confidence and skills of their managers in contributing to the change process. It appears that the extent and quality of RPL implementation was dependent, in part, on the extent of management support given.

Important factors in the implementation of change

The PD program was the change process for the implementation of consistent RPL within the SkillShare region. Without PD, it is unlikely that the objective would have been achieved. The centres individually would have had great difficulty in up-skilling their staff and preparing the associated policy and procedures needed to implement RPL.

As mentioned, the main inhibitors to effective implementation were factors beyond the scope of PD. Particular problems included the destabilising impact of changes to government policy, lack of resources within the centre to support RPL implementation and the limited understanding of the implications of RPL by the CES.

The 'graduates' of the PD program were able to train other staff in RPL. Several are no longer with the SkillShare system, yet are assisting RPL implementation in the capacity of a private consultant. In addition, the RPL skills gained by staff are being applied beyond SkillShare clients and include the recognition of workplace trainer skills by staff and management competencies by managers.

On reflection, there was a need for a better arrangement to inform and prepare SkillShare managers about resource and organisational issues during the PD program for training staff. It is inappropriate to expect training staff to be largely responsible for RPL implementation at their training centres. The solution is not for managers to be part of the learning sets; rather, a separate developmental activity would have been preferable, including involving managers at key stages of the PD process. In addition, a formal consideration of the operational and resource implications of implementing RPL within their centres was required.

The main lessons learnt in terms of PD methodology were:

- the need for PD to be linked to clear outcomes and products that will be used in program or policy implementation;
- the critical importance of individual and group responsibility for their PD ownership;

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- AL methodologies that are directly related to workplace tasks and realities are essential; and
- the critical role of facilitators in managing the AL group.

In relation to the strategic use of PD in supporting change, while other agencies, such as VETNET, have a key role in defining and providing PD, ownership and involvement by management is essential for effective implementation. A parallel development program was needed for managers, including some joint sessions with training staff to explore educational and operational aspects.

Interviewer: Roger Mathers

Introduction to accredited VET training in retail within the school sector of NSW

The objectives of the change

The objective of the change was the inclusion of accredited vocational training in senior secondary education programs in order to provide students with choices of vocational studies and experience, in addition to traditional academic subjects of the Higher School Certificate (HSC).

There was a general concern by the government, the employers and the community that school students were being inadequately prepared for the world of work within the school sector, and that a large percentage of students did not want to pursue university studies. The move towards a greater role by secondary schools in vocational education was initiated in 1992 by the then Minister of Education. In 1993, through the AVTS, pilots were introduced in hospitality, metals and engineering, and retail.

The initiative, which was State-wide, was also aimed at strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation between schools and TAFE, enterprises, industry associations, ITABs and private training providers.

The level of training was limited to ASF level 1, with credit transfer opportunities available into further TAFE studies.

Planning for the change

At the systems level, through a State-wide committee, several State education and training bodies were involved in the planning stages. This involved representatives from the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, Board of Studies, Department of School

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Education (DSE), TAFE, Catholic Education Commission, the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) and ITABs.

The process was driven through the Board of Studies curriculum advisory committees involving representatives from the above-mentioned educational bodies, as well as representatives from ITABs, trade unions and major employer associations. The process took some 12–18 months, leading to a two-unit course of industry studies in three strands: retail, metals and engineering, and hospitality, taught in Years 11 and 12. The courses have dual accreditation, meeting the requirements of both the Board of Studies and VETAB.

The main elements of the change process were:

- curriculum development;
- teacher retraining; and
- developing structured work opportunities for staff and students.

There were several issues that emerged during the planning phase. These included:

- willingness of employers to provide work placements;
- variations in motivation by teachers;
- resistance from some sections of TAFE;
- concerns from employers, industry associations and ITABs regarding the adequacy of the retraining effort;
- adaptation of norm-referenced to criterion-referenced curricula; and
- insufficient resources to support the curriculum.

Planning for PD

The re-training of teachers consisted of two components:

- identification of background requirements of teachers relevant to the VET program (benchmark qualifications); and
- identification of additional training and experience to enable teachers to deliver at the required standard.

Benchmarks for teachers entering the retraining program—identified in association with industry working groups—included matters such as an understanding of business studies, economics and commerce (gained through qualifications), teaching, or working in industry. Expressions of interest were sought from schools for teachers to participate in the program.

The program was directed to teachers in the State and independent school systems who satisfied the benchmark qualifications and experience. It aimed to provide them

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with the skills, knowledge, confidence and motivation to professionally deliver the curriculum.

The main components of PD to prepare teachers were:

- a 2-day orientation program for teachers in all VET areas;
- a 4-day content and knowledge development program; and
- 10 days structured work placement in retail enterprises.

While the same structure applied to the other VET areas, such as engineering and hospitality, the days allocated to on- and off-the-job training varied. This depended on the gap between the background of teachers and the requirements of the new curriculum.

In order that schools could deliver a quality program, teachers were required to have both content and knowledge and experience of retailing. Initially, ITAB was concerned that this package of training and experience was less than that required of other VET teachers and trainers of retail. Initially, they were unaware of the capacity of schools and the background of teachers. Negotiations on these and other matters led to decisions being made about benchmarks for teachers and the extent and nature of PD, which were appropriate to the requirements of providing an entry-level course within the HSC.

The orientation program addressed a range of broad vocational education matters including the training agenda, work-place learning, CBT, assessment, national modules, and industry perspectives on training, as well as an opportunity to concentrate on the implications for their vocational area. The 4-day program consisted of seven modules of retail training.

The methodology used in the off-the-job component was a seminar approach, with teachers being able to work with the resources provided and seek clarification as required.

The work experience consisted of a 10-day placement, of which 5 days had to be spent in a retail organisation employing not less than 100 people. A logbook was used by the teacher and their workplace supervisor to record experiences and competencies achieved. Although the Department of School Eduction (DSE) worked with several major retailers to make work placements available to teachers, teachers generally had found and arranged their own placements. This experience was seen as valuable in assisting their students to find work placements.

Initially, it was expected that teachers would complete the total re-training program prior to the commencement of teaching the retail courses. Subsequently, teachers were allowed to commence teaching and undertake re-training in parallel, providing it was finalised prior to students completing their course.

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An RPL process was available for teachers. For example, one teacher interviewed was given exemption from the 10-day on-the-job training due to her experience of running a retail business.

A range of resources was used in PD, including the syllabus, teacher guides, assessment specifications, instructor's own handouts and a resource kit prepared by TAFE. Because the change process was State-wide and was linked to the implementation of Board of Studies curricula, the PD program needed to be highly planned and structured. The PD program was seen as pivotal to the successful introduction of VET in schools.

The motivation of participants varied initially, yet improved over time as the program settled and the retail program proved to be successful. Some sections of TAFE were concerned about the move to deliver VET in schools and the undermining effect that this may have on TAFE program responsibilities in the future.

The successful completion of the total PD program led to teachers receiving a certificate of eligibility to deliver the retail program, issued by the VET in Schools State Committee, and a statement of the attainment of the skills-based component delivered by TAFE.

What actually happened in implementing the change

The retail training programs within schools were successfully implemented.

Considering the scope of the change process, the various players cooperated well. The Minister and CEOs gave strong support to the process. Both the school curriculum and PD program were well-designed through the involvement of skilled and experienced people.

On reflection, however, the resources to support the curriculum should have been more extensive and of a higher quality. The teachers interviewed expressed concern that the curriculum developers did not sufficiently address the resource and support needs of teachers to deliver the program. There appears to be a lack of appropriate texts suitable for the Australian context and the cost of training videos is very high, making it difficult for schools to purchase them. They also mentioned operational problems such as use of cars for visiting workplaces, time to visit work sites, access to phones and the use of business cards. They felt that the program developed had under-estimated the time and resources needed to plan, coordinate and deliver VET training both on- and off-the-job.

All but one of the cohorts involved in the off-the-job component of PD was trained by TAFE. One cohort was trained by a skill centre but this arrangement was unable to provide State-wide coverage cost-effectively.

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What actually happened in the implementation of the PD?

The PD program went largely to plan. While the work placements for teachers were more difficult to organise than anticipated; it appears that teachers and employers/supervisors found the placements a positive experience. Employers were surprised and impressed by the attitude of the teachers. For a few teachers, the experience had led them to change their career from teaching to training retailing. The teachers interviewed suggested that the two 5-day work placements be spread further apart, with the first placement taken early and the other later, after some considerable teaching experience.

The RPL process for teachers within the PD program worked well.

The initial PD programs were dogged by scepticism and doubt both from TAFE and secondary school teachers. It appears that, initially, some teachers may have been coerced by their principals. However, it appears that teachers are now keen to apply. Thus, over time this situation has improved.

In addition, the initial skills-based program was not structured as a CBT program. Later, however, it was decided to accredit the program, and assessment was added. This led to additional demands on TAFE in terms of design, delivery and assessment.

The provision and funding of learning resources in retail for the PD program were limited. TAFE undertook to compile a set of resources, yet this was not funded. Additional funds would have allowed for a better presentation of the material. The teachers interviewed considered the material to be poorly presented. They recognised that it was assembled in a short timeframe and it contained a selection of existing resources used by TAFE teachers. However, they found the material a useful starting point, even though it was not tailored to their needs.

In the first year, 30 teachers were re-trained. Since then approximately 500 teachers per year have been retrained, with about 350 teachers of retail in total.

In the first program, all teachers would attend the PD at one of two locations in Sydney. Now, it is delivered locally in association with TAFE. As a result of the experience in delivering the PD program, the orientation session now involves smaller numbers, uses a workshop style of training and experienced teachers are used as facilitators. The teachers felt the 4-day TAFE program was too intense and not a particularly effective way of learning. They suggested a semester-long program of fortnightly meetings, adopting a more AL and problem-solving approach. However, this approach may not be appropriate for non-metropolitan teachers.

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The outcomes of the change

The intended outcome of the change was the provision of accredited vocational training in senior secondary schools in order to provide students with choices of vocational studies and experience within the HSC. While the outcome was achieved, there were considerable challenges in securing work placements for both teachers and students. Furthermore, there was a slower take up of retail training in some schools than was anticipated and there was resistance to the scheme by some employers.

There were several benefits which flowed from the process of developing and implementing VET in schools and these include:

- greater dialogue between the sectors: schools, industry, unions, ITABs and TAFE;
- secondary and TAFE teachers have a better understanding of each others' roles and expertise;
- provision of alternative pathways for students not going on to universities;
- secondary school teachers have new skills and confidence to teach vocational education and go out into their community;
- schools enjoy greater understanding and support by employers, industry associations, ITABs and parents;
- the Board of Studies was challenged to address criterion-referenced assessment; and
- renewal opportunities were provided for teachers.

The negatives included:

- a lack of adequate resources to support some programs at the school level;
- in some instances, TAFE believes its role in vocational education is being undermined; and
- extra work load placed on teachers because of the introduction of retail courses.

It is also understood that many teachers of retail have enrolled in advanced retail and other business courses within TAFE as part of their personal commitment to their PD. Several have applied for Release to Industry (RTI) programs offered by DSE.

In terms of staffing, the DSE is planning to pilot the use of industry people to teach some elements of VET programs in schools. They will need to complete an educational qualification. Teaching, particularly part-time positions, may be seen as an attractive occupation, especially for women with retail experience.

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Important factors in the process of change

While the program was essentially a success, there were limitations in the provision of resources and associated funding to support both the PD and the school program.

The strong support provided by the then Minister for education, CEOs and industry bodies was critical to the project's success.

The consultations indicated a need for a graduate certificate or diploma program in VET to support the continuing education needs of teachers of VET in schools. Those programs are currently being developed by several universities.

Suggestions for improvement to the process of review and development include the following:

- The PD package should be seen as a beginning, with the need for periodic follow-up training, including network PD activities.
- It would be worthwhile for students to contribute to the improvement process.
- Universities should be included in the change and PD process, in order that they are able to keep up-to-date with changing initial and continuing development needs of teachers. Universities could provide credit transfer for this VET retraining program into both undergraduate and postgraduate programs.
- There should be a development of support networks for teachers of VET in schools, as well as teachers being part of larger VET networks involving industry, TAFE and private provider trainers in retail.
- The need for school principals and head teachers to be well aware of the developments in VET, and the planning and resourcing required to support quality programs in their schools.

Interviewer: Roger Mathers

Flexible and work-based delivery strategies for small business training at Eastern Institute of TAFE

The change/objectives being investigated

Experimentation, exploration, development and delivery of flexible training for small business were the broad change objectives. Specifically, in November 1993, Eastern Institute of TAFE was commissioned by the Office of Training and Further Education (OTFE) to develop a curriculum framework incorporating a new Certificate in Small

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Business Management and learning materials, later to become the Small Business Training Series. The now accredited Certificate course was designed to provide training in small business management in a manner that offers the flexibility required by small business, whether they be intenders, new starters, or those already established.

Initially, the scope was intended to be State-wide, with the potential for national applicability. Initiation was strongly driven by the philosophy of the institute's management with its emphasis on outreach, community and flexibly delivered training. It was also influenced by the need expressed by small business operators for more substantial training and recognition than the existing 20-hour one-off Getting Started in Small Business program offered. A 1993 institute study, Training for success in home-based self-employment and small business also supported the need, which was further acted upon by management staff of the institute's Business Enterprise Centre (BEC).

Planning for the change

A core group of 1.5 BEC staff and six sessional trainers was expanded to include involvement of representatives of key players driving the process of course development. Consultations with small business operators, a Develop a Curriculum (DACUM) workshop with a select group, extensive consultations with industry directly and the establishment of a representative Industry Advisory Committee were means by which the required operational competencies and initial eight areas of study suitable for modules were established. Learning outcomes and assessment criteria were developed in consultation with experienced trainers and practising small business operators; small business operators developed learning materials under TAFE guidance.

The short timeframe (between November 1993 and Term 4, 1994) emphasised the need for coordination and integration of the many complementary strands of change development by the newly appointed project manager. The first 2-day staff PD program was in August 1994, prior to the certificate course commencing in Term 4. Change has been on-going ever since.

The course materials and their application became main elements in the change process. These consisted of a curriculum document, eight self-paced/stand-alone Small Business Training Series manuals, staff development/implementation material and a computerised test-bank—the Learning Management System (LMS)—for feedback and assessment. Modules within the course were designed for various delivery modes, including lectures, demonstrations, group discussion, interactive audio and video, computer assistance, individual and group projects, and peer review.

The impact on trainers of the introduction of a competency-based curriculum, the requirements of an accredited course, flexible delivery approaches and, in particular, a

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computer-based competency assessment system had to be anticipated. The use of multi-campuses and alternative venues, the need for increased travel, and flexible availability and targeted student contact hours (SCH) also posed potential difficulties. Marketing and publishing operations would also become increasingly important support arms. Competency and skill acquisition of trainers and extra administration staff, attitudinal dimensions, operational strategies and a necessary shift in philosophy were issues. These had to be addressed through careful consideration of staff PD in concert with the change development itself.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

The project manager, Industry Training Projects, had early responsibility for the PD elements; on-going PD has been assumed by the coordinator of small business training, who took up her position in June 1994. The wide range of needs of both trainers and presenters identified during the change planning phase was influenced by a number of factors. These included the need for course presenters to have practical experience in running a small business, experience and demonstrated competency in the skills they are helping to develop, and training competence. Because many of the presenters of the course are small business operators with little TAFE and accredited training experience, they require assistance in gaining an understanding of accredited programs. It was recognised that this was not achievable overnight. During the first year of the new program, each trainer was encouraged to complete the 2-day staff development workshop specifically designed to:

- increase the level of understanding of small business operations and trainees;
- provide strategies for use of resources to improve the flexible delivery of small business courses;
- increase the level of understanding of applying competency-based training delivery and assessment to small business training; and
- provide a networking and shared staff development opportunity.

Further training in the LMS system was conducted as a follow-up. Resources included a staff development kit designed specifically for workshop and follow-up use. The kit is in two parts:

- Part 1—trainer's guide, consisting of suggestions for presentation of the program as well as a set of overheads;

- Part 2—participant's manual, consisting of notes for each module of the course.

Funding was needed for this resource development and for the actual running costs of the 2-day PD program. Since then, it has become a fee-for-service enterprise.

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Initial anticipated difficulties included the diversity of participants, the participants' differing levels of experience and competence, and various agendas. In addition, there was the problem of new and potentially threatening concepts being introduced. However, cost is now seen as the greatest problem. Another obstacle was the diverse levels of commitment to the shift in culture and practice; unless a high level of trainer commitment was maintained, positions came into question. However, the very deliberately planned and tailored PD component, integral to the success of the change process, helped overcome resistance and inexperience, as did the high level of commitment of BEC and institute management.

What actually happened in implementing the change?

Some manuals were not available on time, some trainers could not accommodate the changes, the technology of LMS was a problem for trainers and course participants, and not all small business had computers and/or owners who were computer literate. Some mature and often tertiary-qualified participants were sceptical of the new training directions, which meant another shift for trainers; adult 'course participants', rather than 'students', needed to be trained using adult-learning strategies.

Flexible delivery meant that timetabling was a challenge and required creativity in allocation to widely spread venues, predominantly after hours. The use of institute rooms and library facilities was taxing, and safety and security became issues to be resolved.

The materials and resources developed during the change planning and implementation phases, the course itself and the delivery strategies, generally worked well. Timetabling to facilitate greater user choice was particularly well-accepted. This was assisted by the PD component and the sense of ownership engendered by the staff's active involvement in the change development. One major difficulty was the technology component of LMS, where staff, inexperienced in computer use, needed more tutoring and practical application than was planned. Some tensions were also created between teaching and non-teaching staff (business/industry). Since then, mutual interdependence has been recognised and they have become a sounding board for each other.

The change implementation is recognised as being very successful overall, with in-built flexibility and an achievable vision that met expectations.

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What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element?

Success was ensured by the active involvement of participants from the early stages, the integrated nature of the change and the tailored PD, and the flexibility which allowed changes to be made. Feedback from the PD allowed adjustments to be made to the change itself. For example, funding of SCH had to be reconsidered and eventually broken down to a project basis, and staff numbers and allocation needed attention. It was also apparent that not all needs were understood at first and shifts were accommodated as redevelopment took place. The diversity of the group contributed to a later re-writing of some curriculum (specifically for Kooris), and more flexible delivery of the PD is under consideration to allow for spaced activities and distance-learning.

The outcomes of the change

The intended outcomes of the change centred on enhancing and facilitating individuals' and the institute's capacities to flexibly deliver accredited training for small business. In turn, there was a deliberate intent to broaden the marketing activities of the institute through the sale of products to others. As publishing through Eastern House expanded, the profits would be ploughed back into the BEC for growth and development.

Major unintended outcomes include a high retention and significant increase of BEC staff, an increase from six to a pool of 20–25 trainers, and healthy financial growth with a steady increase in funded SCH. This has significantly altered the balance of 'power', in that SCH are now critical to operations and the networking arm of BEC operations must contribute to SCH delivery. The institute's BEC operations have also become well-known Australia-wide and, in 1995, was a short-listed finalist entry in the Australian Awards for Excellence in Educational Publishing. On-line delivery is also about to happen and other projects are evolving.

Some pressures have resulted from BEC staff having increased workloads, after-hours work, the increased responsibilities of sessional staff (e.g. building security, staff safety), more complex base organisation and the need to keep teaching material up-to-date and relevant. Industrial issues are also a consequence. However, as most sessional staff are small business operators, they bring up-to-date information and expertise with them. Of greatest significance is the shift in thinking and training delivery across the institute, whereby 2–5% of total SCH, approximately 40 000, must now be delivered in the workplace.

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Important factors in the process of change

The commitment of senior management to the change process, the willingness of key staff to take it on and the belief of the institute in its underlying philosophy, contributed significantly to its success. Availability of OTFE funds, the integrated nature of PD, staff (chosen by a relatively new institute) who were compatible with goals, were all important factors.

Some inhibitors were the administrative structure and its capacity to fully respond, the expanded course content which curtailed flexibility to some extent, and the need for the BEC to push at institute level to maintain and strengthen its profile and resources. An unknown factor is the impact the National Training Framework will have on small business.

The PD component was, and is, central to the process. It has extended its influence beyond the BEC to institute practice and philosophy through the opportunity to seriously consider personal and professional directions. This extends to supportive BEC administrative staff who are seen by students to reflect the professional image of small business delivery and business itself. The coordinator's role has also been acknowledged as crucial in the maintenance of quality and credibility. In addition to contributing to change, the PD has encouraged networking with other institutes and providers, injected new and lateral thinking, facilitated exchange of information, personal growth, curriculum and technological development and a sense of ownership in sessional trainers.

It was learned that PD must come at the right time, be involving and an integral part of the change process, be on-going, and continuously cater for new staff. The need for one-to-one counselling by the coordinator has also been significant. Elements such as logistics of flexible delivery and rolling enrolments have brought administrative and marketing pressures, while mistakes made by other departments (e.g. self-paced learning modules), have helped BEC. All concerned wish they could do the same with PD every time!

Based on this experience, several other aspects of major importance can be singled out:

- allow sufficient lead-in time;
- ensure support for dramatic change through sufficient funding and integrated PD;
- know your participants; and
- involve all stakeholders in the design and planning of key elements through a team approach.

This model and principles of change and PD has proven to be very adaptable and transferable within the VET sector. It is open to customisation according to need across a wide range of settings, with extremely beneficial and gratifying outcomes.

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Additional notes

The following were significant aspects of this change and PD process:

- strong leadership and management commitment, with clear philosophy;
- capable/committed key players in BEC positions of responsibility;
- involvement of staff, business community and relevant others in work on-the-ground, which led to relevant materials and 'ownership';
- integrated approach to all planning and development;
- clear objectives and understanding of audience;
- continual monitoring/review of processes and materials, on-going PD;
- one-to-one counselling and support from coordinator, including by phone;
- funds/resources from OTFE and the institute;
- marketing and publishing functions; and
- open-mindedness, flexibility and entrepreneurial flair

Interviewer: Judy McLeod

Cultural change from classroom-based teaching to flexible, client-based consulting at Western Metropolitan Institute of TAFE

Introduction

The Wholesale/Retail Services Department of Western Metropolitan Institute of TAFE (WMIT) is located at new premises in King Street, Melbourne. Over the last 3–4 years, the department has implemented a new system of operations that moved away from traditional classroom-based teaching methods to a system of offering consultancy services to clients in order provide assistance to them in achieving their training goals.

The change being investigated

The initiators of the radical change to this department was the head of department and the senior management at WMIT. They identified a need for the department to move from a classroom-based, structured system to a flexible, client-based one. The change was required to ensure that the department could continue to respond to:

- new initiatives in the VET sector;
- changing staffing levels; and
- the shrinking provision of government and funding the needs of industry clients.

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With the role of TAFE changing and becoming more industry-driven, the changes within the department were seen as necessary for the survival of the department and essential for growth and success. Staff also recognised the need to become more flexible and responsive to client needs and to move 'outside their comfort zones'.

The need to make the department more responsive to client needs involved a major cultural change for all staff and could only be implemented with the support of management of the institute. Teaching staff have changed from 'teachers' into 'consultants' over a period of 2–3 years. They have become multi-skilled consultants who are now involved in marketing, planning, staffing and managing their projects as well as teaching individual modules. Most of these activities are undertaken away from the institute on the clients' premises.

Staff in the department are enthusiastic and have embraced this change in culture. It appears that they have gained considerable self-esteem and a feeling of achievement in their new roles. This is largely due to the methods for achieving the cultural change. The head of department employs a system of mentoring and AL, spending about half of each working day discussing issues and coaching staff in their new roles. She provides support and leadership while employing a hands-off style of management which enables her highly skilled staff to manage their own clients and projects. Considering that her six core staff were used to more traditional teaching roles, considerable success has been achieved using these methods.

Planning for the change

Staff in the department are involved in planning activities 'usually' twice per year. However, most of the planning for this cultural change has rested with the head of department. She describes the planning process as 'evolutionary' and considers that the program is still evolving and growing. No formal planning documents have been produced but considerable evaluation of all projects occurs and changes and PD activities are undertaken as required.

It would appear that the success of the program relies on the willingness of the staff to undertake new activities and ways of working. This aspect requires selective recruiting of staff to ensure that they are flexible and willing to undertake duties which fall outside traditional classroom teaching. The head of department's enthusiasm and commitment to the consultancy role of her staff is very evident. This has encouraged the staff to undertake their new functions and meet the new demands of their jobs in a committed fashion.

Although the planning process was not documented, the head of department believes that to introduce an innovative system of working requires flexibility. In addition, she has a clear vision of where she would like the department to be and how it should

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function. These leadership qualities have obviously played a crucial role in the success of the program and would be one of the major factors of success in introducing a major cultural change such as this within an institution.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

There is little formal planning undertaken for PD activities because staff are empowered to make their own decisions about all aspects of their work. All staff have recently completed training as workplace assessors and some are completing formal qualifications at universities.

The main PD aspects are undertaken through a system of AL and mentoring. Teachers in the department work as teams on individual projects and are, effectively, team leaders; recruiting sessional staff, planning, liaising with clients, mentoring each other, etc.

Normal departmental resources are allocated for staff development activities and all staff are involved in allocating funds and time. The staff believe that any formal or informal PD activities need to be flexible to provide for individual needs and evolving skills and to allow them to be responsive to clients needs.

What actually happened in implementing the change?

The approach taken to PD in this department has grown out of the need to change a core staff from a largely trade-based background into 'teachers who train'. This is undertaken by a five-part process:

1 'Teachers not trainers' using largely classroom-based teaching strategies and delivering only specialised modules.

2 'The nursery'—Staff move to delivering modules, recruiting students, interviewing students course coordination.

3 The move into commercial delivery, initially presenting individual modules and working with commercial clients.

4 Project management for individual commercial clients. This includes developing courses and resources, timetabling, recruiting sessional staff, liaising with clients and workplace assessment.

5 Obtaining work for the project team, developing the team and managing the project. This also involves client liaison and evaluation.

The development of a close and supportive team has assisted staff to achieve their goals and is seen as being essential to the success of any similar program. In addition, the support of senior staff and management who have empowered staff to grow and use their skills is essential. The success of this program is based open lines of

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communication between staff and management and requires a 'hands-off' system of management, which is not always easy to achieve. Staff manage their own projects and learning, and require skills in consultation, communication and self-management.

Due to the required changes to traditional employment conditions, staff need to be willing to be flexible and committed to getting the job done. Staff have developed new skills and feel that they are now using a variety of skills and knowledge. One staff member commented that she 'could not function as just a classroom teacher now' and felt that the reward for changing work conditions was a 'challenging and satisfying job'. Others felt that their needs to grow and achieve were being met and saw this as an appropriate offset to changed working hours and traditional holiday periods.

The outcome of the change

The intended outcomes of the change were to ensure that the department adapted to the changing requirements of the training market and that teaching staff take up the new challenges that this would involve.

The success of the department in over-delivering its allocation of hours, attracting and satisfying new clients and obtaining repeat business from clients attests to the success of the program.

Benefits to the department include:

- flexible, committed staff;
- achievement of institute objectives;
- recognition from peers; and
- the meeting of clients needs and the achievement of repeat business.

Benefits to WMIT:

- provided a way to match recurrent funding to client needs;
- other departments in the institute are looking at implementing a similar program;
- recognition of excellence; and
- high job satisfaction and therefore retention of good staff.

Benefits to individual staff:

- high self-esteem and job satisfaction;
- ability to see results and achievements;
- feeling of empowerment and commitment;
- recognition within the institute and externally;

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- challenging work that provides variety;
- personal growth and utilisation of skills; and
- mentoring system and team work providing a more satisfactory work environment.

Most of the benefits listed as 'individual' were not intended as outcomes but have been integral in providing the motivation for staff to change.

It must be added that this change in focus for the staff has involved a major change to working conditions. The need to travel, consult, teach at times required by clients, take holidays at flexible times and teach in unfamiliar surroundings are sources of major change for staff in TAFE institutions. The success of this program has been reliant on the staff being willing to adapt their working conditions and 'get out of their comfort zone'. Staff who were not willing to make these changes to their working environment would be a major inhibitor to the program's success.

Important factors in the change process

Major factors

The main factors contributing to the success of the program were:

- The commitment of senior staff. (It was considered essential that senior and middle management allow the staff to have the autonomy to manage their own work.)
- Staff who were willing to assume responsibility and change their traditional way of working.
- The use of a team-based structure. (Team work provides the necessary support mechanisms in what can be a stressful environment.)
- The importance placed on PD. (Staff appear committed to their own development, partly because they are self-assessing their skills and developing their own PD plans.)
- A supportive, mentoring environment. (This allowed staff to make decisions and mistakes in a non-threatening environment which ultimately, empowered them.)
- Excellent lines of communication at all levels.

Problems associated with the program

The head of department saw her major problem as lack of reward systems. She finds that the current system does not allow adequate reward systems, especially in the form of monetary benefits. She can reward staff by being flexible with time (it should be noted that some programs for a major corporate client are delivered at 3am) and by providing prestigious staff development activities. She does not feel that these rewards,

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combined with job satisfaction, are always sufficient. Staff do feel rewarded and are achieving their goals. However, 'we get paid the same as any teacher who still sits in a classroom delivering what they have been delivering for 10 years'. While not seen as a major problem, more flexible rewards built into the system may help encourage more staff to participate.

Staff suggested that the TAFE system does not provide adequate resources for PD and that this sometimes required compromises to be made in activities undertaken. Lack of funds and time were mentioned as problems.

Transferability of the change and PD activity

It was felt that this type of change was readily transferable to most VET programs and departments. While there will always be room for classroom-based instruction, the new environment in VET requires a major cultural shift of this kind in order to be successful.

This kind of program does, however, require a major commitment from staff, and management must be wiliing to empower staff to achieve. A cultural shift of this magnitude in a TAFE Institute will require everyone involved to be flexible and adaptable and some staff may not be comfortable or willing to make the appropriate changes.

Conclusion

This program is an excellent example of PD integrated into the normal working life of a department. It provides a great deal of job satisfaction and achievement for staff and is achieving the goals of the department and institute. Its success is very much dependent on the commitment and flexibility of all involved. As a model for achieving the cultural shift necessary for TAFE in the 1990s, it has been recognised in Victoria and interstate. The considerable work involved for all concerned appears to be rewarded on both professional and personal levels with a strong sense of achievement, pride and job satisfaction.

Interviewer: Jane Cross

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Access to information technology for TAFE staff, students and local community at Para Institute of TAFE

The change/objectives being investigated

The focus of this case study is the implementation of an innovative program at Para Institute of TAFE to provide access to information technology (IT) to a range of groups within the community. These groups included TAFE staff, students and the local community. The outcomes of the project were:

- the development of short- and long-term IT plans for Para Institute of TAFE;
- the creation of an intranet to disseminate information to staff;
- the establishment of an 'internet cafe' at the institute; and
- the creation of benchmarks for other providers.

Specific PD strategies were incorporated into the project. These included:

- the active dissemination of information about IT to all staff;
- a comprehensive training program for all staff to raise awareness and skill levels in relation to the use of IT;
- increased training for computer services staff to allow increased support to be provided to users; and
- the development of staff to provide colleagues with support in the development of IT skills.

Planning for the change

The scope of the change was institution-wide and planned to incorporate benefits for the wider community through the establishment of the Internet café. Within the institute itself, the changes were also in response to problems with existing use of IT by staff. Very few people were able to access the email or the Internet. People were frustrated with the system and it had reached a point where a decision needed to be made about the use of computers and the adoption of IT within the institute. Resources were committed and a person was employed to act as a catalyst for this process by developing a short-term IT plan for the institute and to provide a basis for the development of a strategy to train staff in the use of technology. The development of the 'power user group' was part of this component of the strategy. After the completion of this phase of the project, the person was then asked to develop a long-term IT plan for the institute, to cover all areas of activity (operational, educational and creative uses).

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The change process was characterised as 'incremental and iterative', built on a sound infrastructure of planning. 'Leaps of faith' were taken throughout the change process but they were 'not terribly risky' because each stage was consolidated and affirmed. All phases were evaluated in a formative manner.

Another important aspect of the change process was to ensure that 'all our colleagues (i.e. other managers) came along with us'. This was particularly important in an initiative that focussed on IT which necessarily involved a high level of financial commitment from the entire organisation.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

Educating the wider community within the institute of the value of the change was an important part of the PD element, along with the marshalling of other resources such as facilities, equipment, etc. It was also acknowledged that staff's previous experience with IT (mostly negative, brought about by failed systems etc.), which often manifested itself in negative attitudes, needed to be addressed as part of the change process. It was felt that staff needed to be 'coaxed along' and allowed to experience success early in the program.

For one manager, the process was simply viewed as an application of the learning principles that are an integral part of work with the students—specifically, learning is facilitated when it is immediate and relevant. The managers were able to cite 'wonderful inverse lessons of imposed change' that did not succeed. These pictures of 'what not to do' were useful prompts for this change process. The managers believed they did many things right, in that change was introduced in a timely manner, support was available, and the change was implemented in 'bite-size pieces'. The process involved making judgements about what was immediately relevant and only this was provided.

The managers pointed out that they were not able to 'pull out a piece of paper which detailed their staff development plan'. They did believe that they had succeeded in integrating this 'just-in-time professional development' notion into staff's thinking. The working of this idea could be further illustrated by the work of various other committees within the institute. In all aspects of their deliberations, staff development implications are always considered as part of the overall management process. This proactive stance was contrasted to a more reactive approach where PD is either neglected altogether or left to the last minute.

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What actually happened in implementing the change?

Because the organisation viewed itself as 'in the business of education', the application of learning principles seemed to be a natural way to progress through the change. This was also an important part of the intention to set up a system that could continue long after the initial impetus for the change had past. In other words, staff would access further help in relation to their use of IT as the need arose in their work.

The amount of PD provided by individual staff to their colleagues depended very much on the specific area of the institute. In certain areas, people lacked some of the very basic skills and hence were not able to take up the opportunities that were presented. In other words, some staff lacked fundamental skills and staff providing the PD support were unclear as to whether is was their responsibility to bring these people 'up to speed'.

One aspect of the PD strategy that was considered a great success was the AL group associated with the establishment of the Internet café. The PD associated with this was formally provided (i.e. people attended sessions). The staff felt they learned a lot which has been able to be applied much more widely in other aspects of their work. AL was praised for its well-established framework, which was easy for people to work through. The process of learning was described as very stimulating (as opposed to the more passive seminars). The social aspects of AL were also mentioned as carrying a real benefit. The notion of 'being able to come across the road' and mix with staff from other parts of the institute was a valuable component of the learning process.

The 'power user group' also played a significant role in supporting staff when the intranet was introduced to the institute. PD happened in this instance, but it was almost 'unseen' and described as *ad hoc* by some staff.

The staff emphasised that the change in the Computer Support Services was integral to the change process. This group provided the 'formalised and visible support structure' for the PD processes and overall change. This support, however, was not able to be applied uniformly across all sections of the institute. Some staff did report not having access to the hardware and software, which meant that the PD, to some degree, was meaningless.

What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element?

At each stage of the plan, the PD needs seemed to 'emerge naturally'. 'Bringing along' the managers and, through them, their staff teams to gain support for the expenditure on the project was seen as a PD activity.

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A number of 'up-front' types of PD (i.e., workshops) that focussed purely on knowledge and skills formation were planned as an integral part of the change process. These were seen as only a small part of the overall PD plan for the change. In addition, a deliberate process that enabled a network of staff to provide support to other staff was established. The support staff were derived from two sources—the previous group who provided computer services to the institute and a smaller group of staff who have been designated the task of providing support for their colleagues. The rationale behind this approach was described as 'just in time', 'just enough'; in other words, PD was provided to staff as they identified their need for such development. This often occurred in a fairly immediate way. For example, a staff member might try to log on to email and encounter difficulties. The request for help which accompanied this incident was seen as a PD event. The staff member was able to access the required knowledge and skills from a colleague at their point and time of need.

The staff who were involved in the process of establishing the 'power user group' felt that their role has been weakened over time. After the initial impetus provided by the IT manager, it was hoped that this group would then take some responsibility for on-going development of staff IT skills. However, the consensus from the group of people interviewed was that this had not happened in the way that was intended. There did not seem to be any clear idea of how this process might have 'developed'. The view was put that the lack of coordination (that is, getting people from a variety of different areas of the institute together) was a contributing factor. In the beginning, the group itself had a spread in terms of expertise in IT use, which over time 'levelled out'. This meant that there was not an immediate and obvious direction to move into; from a situation where 'X knows this and we don't; so X can facilitate us learning about this' to a point where almost all members felt they had an equivalent level of knowledge and expertise. There needed to be some leadership to determine what the next stage in the development process might be. The directions could be many and something needed to emerge so that the group could then take it up.

The outcomes of the change

There is a lot of hard evidence that staff are using IT more frequently. There is still a newsletter that is circulated at regular intervals. Initially, people were not sure about the usefulness of this type of strategy; however, over time, people were able to make more sense of the tips and hints, for example, that were in the newsletter and were visibly responding positively to this.

The successful implementation of the Internet café was a very tangible outcome for the change process. The success of this has been widely acknowledged, particularly through the receipt of an ANTA Best Practice Award.

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Some of the staff who have been involved in supporting their colleagues continue to facilitate training on IT related issues.

Important factors in the process of change

In the opinion of the managers, one of the most important factors that contributed to the success of the project was the employment of the 'right' person for the initial task of catalysing change. The person required for the job not only needed technical expertise, they also had to have an 'education and training vision'. In this instance 'necessity' was the driver of the initiative, but it would not have happened if there had not been a group of people to 'catalyse the change' throughout the organisation. Repeating this initiative would involve a combination of recruiting the right person to act as a change agent, supported by a group of people within an organisation who had vision and a willingness to act on that vision even if they were unsure where it might take them. The process involves 'a leap of faith'.

One other important factor in the change process was seen to be the empowerment of the individual to never lose sight that IT just involves tools and the individual has control of these tools. This is different from systems, where people are 'taught to obey the tools' and are taught in isolation from the bigger picture. The big picture behind the change is important. The context, 'where I fit in', was constantly presented.

Other spin-offs from the change include the outlook of people; staff are now 'thinking international' as the web opens up a whole new world of possibilities.

Staff in the IT services and the 'power user group' have benefited from the change in that they have been able to develop skills in running training courses for other staff. This has enabled them to see the implications of the 'other side'; that is, they work in a training institute which needs to provide very high levels of client service if they are to remain competitive in the open training market. Working as a facilitator of a training program in a room where a number of computers are not working really brings home the need for a client focus!

The staff and management felt they had learnt a number of lessons from their experiences. These included:

- The importance of acknowledging that you are intending to 'be in the game'. This involved a whole-hearted commitment, including an initial and on-going commitment to resources.

- The employment of the right people to do the job. These people need to be good communicators who can relate well to other people, not isolated technicians.

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- The importance of having a long-term plan. This needs to be clear so that progress can be measured over time. Planning needs to see change as an open-ended process, rather than a short-term reactionary process.

- PD cannot be 'locked in' too far in advance. The managers emphasised the need for a flexible approach and that the 'just-in-time' philosophy is really the only one that works. There is a place for group sessions but these are more likely to be of an introductory nature. It is more important to consider what happens to staff when they return to their work groups and are sitting in front of their computers and saying 'I can't remember'. It is at this time that individualised help is needed.

The principles that underpin this approach to PD were seen to have much in common with work-based learning, which is applicable across any area where change needs to be managed.

The staff were able to offer the following advice to about PD and change.

- Support for the change needs to be visible and constant.

- The managers need to have an idea of what is intended to be the outcome of the change so that they can provide authentic support.

- Change needs resources and personal support (both elements were viewed as having equal importance).

- It is important to validate the notion that undertaking PD as part of the normal routine of work is fine. Making time for this to occur is an important way of validating this idea.

- Anticipating change is a good thing, rather than leaving it to the last moment. This will avoid the situation where staff are feeling they are learning because 'we need to'. Rather, planning will allow learning to occur because we 'might need it'. Learning without time pressures gives staff the time to 'play' with new technology, to practice and to learn from others.

- Managers can help to clarify needs in relation to PD by keeping the big picture in sight. Tangents are acceptable (they allow creativity) but there is a need to keep an eye on the 'main game'.

- It is important that managers exchange information between themselves to keep up-to-date with what is happening. This can provide an avenue which could provide recognition for innovation etc., and allows new ideas to be spread across the institute. This spreading of ideas and innovations prevents the creation of the 'have and have nots' which can lead to professional jealousies and are difficult to deal with.

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- Time is also an issue which needs to be considered realistically. Maintaining productivity in the current climate is so important and finding time to learn can be difficult. There appears to be little flexibility in the system from which staff can squeeze out time for learning. Time is important because it allows for consolidation of skills. It is also particularly important if people indicate they want help or training and are then left waiting because there is not enough time for this (one of the problems when PD provision is devolved right down to workers—as it is in this model).

Interviewer: Michele Simons

The introduction of the Frontline Management Initiative at Orlando Winery through Murray Institute of TAFE

The change/objectives being investigated

The introduction of the Frontline Management Initiative (FMI) with Orlando Wines was the focus of the change process in this case study. This is a pilot program which is currently being implemented and managed by Murray Institute of TAFE. At the time of the interviews, the pilot program had been underway for 3 weeks. The timeline for completion of the pilot program is unclear as this will be determined by the needs of the industry as the program develops.

Planning for the change

The impetus for the introduction of the FMI can be traced back to the release of the Karpin report (approximately 2 years ago) and the proactive response to this event by the State manager for the management program in TAFE. An invitation was extended to a member of the Karpin Committee to brief all management staff on the implications of the Karpin report for management training. The strong message that emerged from this initiative was the importance of training for the supervisor (or frontline manager).

At the time, TAFE was delivering an effective frontline management course, based on the national generic management skills modules. This delivery had been underpinned by a lot of training for lecturers in the use of those modules. There had also been a system of module advisors established (staff nominated as experts in particular sets of modules) who provided support and advice to other management lecturers and part-time staff about a range of delivery and assessment issues (for example, standards and approaches for assessment). The specific focus of this development was to ensure that there was a consistent approach across the State in terms of the delivery and assessment

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of modules. Some useful case studies had also been developed illustrating how to assess in a practical competency-based framework so that the work undertaken by students at TAFE would have an impact back in the workplace. In short, a good track record had been developed in making management training relevant to the workplace. Hence, initiatives that were to flow out of the recommendations of the Karpin report were not seen as a 'quantum leap' for the program, but rather a natural progression from previous work.

Planning for the introduction of the FMI, therefore, was seen in a much broader context and viewed as having been commenced several years ago when a number of senior staff within the program management group 'read the signs of the times'. There was a growing emphasis on workplace delivery of training coupled with a need for staff to 'change their perspective' from one focussed on classroom delivery of training. Reflecting on the political context and the changes to the ways in which vocational education and training might be delivered 'led to the inevitable conclusion that this is how it was going to be'. The program group 'did an environmental scan and looked at the way the wind was blowing' and decided that they needed to be prepared for these changes.

Management of the change was undertaken over a 3-year period through a number of vehicles. These included groups such as the Management Training Core Standards Group (key lecturers from every institute in South Australia) and the reduction of competition between institutes which allowed for greater collaboration and the development of a program area which was relatively new to TAFE. The newness of the program, coupled with reduced resources (both in physical and human terms), created a press for collaboration. Capitalising on the existing strengths and using processes which 'brought people together for professional development' were also key ingredients in the management of change. This collaboration had led to the development of a consortium of management staff which allows for the movement of 'expert' staff from institute to institute to teach in their areas of expertise. This has enabled a sharing of expertise and greater efficiencies; for example, teachers are not being asked to work in areas outside their expertise.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

There has been a staff development project in place since 1993, whereby all management lecturers were required to undertake a training program to become certified workplace assessors. Key staff completed the Workplace Assessor Training Course developed by Hawthorn Institute and then passed these skills on to others. This process is now being revisited using workplace assessor training available in South Australia to accommodate new lecturers who have come into the TAFE system in the past few years (particularly part-time lecturers).

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Within the management program, PD activities have always been made available to all staff by invitation but it is left to individual staff members to take up the opportunities presented. However, managers of staff were always notified of PD activities with the clear message that if they could not send all staff, then some of the key staff would be allowed to participate and then 'spread the word'. There was also a system in place which enabled the module advisors to come together at frequent intervals. The purpose of these meetings was an exchange of information on ways in which these staff were intending to support the broader staff group in their work.

Another major component of staff development arose out of the 2-year visit to Regency Campus by Keith Walton (from England), who conducted a best practice management development project. This project was based on the UK management competency standards and involved a program to train managers at Regency TAFE, which required no formal course work. The links between this project and the processes being used to work with students in the management courses offered by TAFE were immediately apparent. Both courses were based on competency standards. Each course was achieving outcomes via a different pathway. Keith Walton conducted three workshops in 1996 for management lecturers across South Australia. This provided staff with a management development framework which was grounded in the achievement of the required competencies and was totally based in the workplace. Because the lecturers were already well-grounded in thinking about the practical application of management theory in the workplace, the framework presented in the workshops was a natural progression in thinking for the staff.

In all these instances, PD was a planned and targeted activity. Part of the PD focus is on building the practical skills of staff. The other aspect of the development activities is the importance of the process in building a cohesive team of staff who are all working towards a common goal. It is important that staff know who they are able to contact should they need help or advice.

Implementing the FMI therefore was viewed as a 'natural progression'. Initial PD was selected on the basis of credibility with potential clients and the judicious selection from available resources (in this instance Keith Walton's program). Planning for PD is therefore seen as a cyclical process, which has its basis in the identification of general trends and the answer to the question 'how do we train people for this changed environment?'.

The PD strategy is now underpinning the introduction of the FMI which arose out of a contact that had been developed and nurtured over a period of time. It is therefore difficult to separate specific PD for the FMI. What was emphasised during the interviews was the importance of:

- people who had the ability to 'read the signs'; to think strategically and then act on the outcomes of their analysis;

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- key people who could act as catalysts or foci for the change process; and
- the development of a foundation from which an initiative such as FMI could be implemented.

What actually happened in implementing the change?

The impetus for the introduction of the FMI with Orlando can be traced back some 2–3 years ago when joint discussions were held with the State manager for business studies and senior government officials in the State Department of Agriculture and Horticulture. A working party was established and discussions commenced with Orlando and a number of senior lecturing staff within TAFE. A group of writers to produce the modules for the initiative were formed some time later. This group spent a good deal of time within the industry and liaising with a group of peers who had been formed to provide a 'sounding board' for their ideas as the writing of the modules proceeded. The manager felt confident in being able to draw from a pool of staff who had built up considerable expertise over a period of 3 years. The program with Orlando is a pilot; the results of which will be shared with all staff in the management program and will be used to 'write the next staff development exercise'.

During the implementation of the FMI, surprise was expressed at the number of staff from Orlando who were to be involved. Alternative arrangements needed to be made to accommodate these increased numbers. In addition, some difficulties were encountered with staff who had concerns about participating in the program. These issues were resolved on the initiative of one of the TAFE staff who contacted the supervisors at Orlando who had staff on the program and establishing ways in which these supervisors could support staff in their learning.

In the opinion of the manager of the program, the PD activities leading up to the implementation of the FMI with Orlando was sufficient, given the staff who were chosen to be involved. Experienced staff were hand picked to be involved in the initiative, but on the understanding that the skills of other staff would be developed over time. It was noted, however, that there would be some staff who would not be suitable for this type of work. Other staff would need on-going support, perhaps in the form of a mentoring program to enable them to carry out the full range of activities associated with developing programs of training in industry settings.

What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element?

The implementation of the PD activity summarised above was described as a 'very pragmatic response' to an identified set of trends and circumstances. The PD strategy that has been implemented was done so without any particular initiative in mind. It

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was, in fact, generated so that it could support a range of changes within the management program. These all derived from the themes and issues arising from the Karpin report and other government initiatives in relation to the development and delivery of training within the VET sector. This broader focus was, in the opinion of the manager, a great advantage to the organisation because it forms the foundation for any number of future activities which might be undertaken. In this instance, the introduction of the FMI with Orlando is seen as one of the activities to benefit from the PD program.

The outcomes of the change

What has become apparent to the manager over time is the need for a 'change in the teacher mindset' which needed to occur alongside the development of skills such as the ability to conduct assessments in the workplace. As a result of experiences with the FMI at Orlando to date, skills in consultation and liaison with industry, ethics, and protocols for working within industry have been identified as forthcoming foci of staff development initiatives.

In addition, further changes such as the introduction of training packages will necessarily mean that the PD strategies used to underpin the introduction of the FMI will need to be on-going and suitably modified to support the development of staff to deal with these future changes. In the words of the training manager:

> ... what we need to be careful about is ... it's no good saying 'We're on board. We've got everyone trained as workplace assessors, they've all done management development, they know how to train in industry, we have got their skills up to speed etc., etc.'. Because there are new people coming into the system all the time and a lot of them are coming through the classroom-based context first and so we need to be aware that we need to spot check every so often that people are up to speed with a different way of delivering training.

Important factors in the process of change

The PD in the introduction of the FMI was seen as crucial because the initiative itself required a fundamental shift in the ways in which people thought about the most appropriate means of delivering management training. On more than one occasion during the interviews the need for a change in staffs' 'mindsets' was emphasised as critical to the change management process. Moving people out of the classroom and preparing them to deliver training in workplaces is the key critical change. This was prepared for well in advance of a specific initiative to conduct training in the workplace for a specific enterprise. It was derived from a critical awareness of key trends and emerging issues in policy development within the vocational education and training sector.

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A number of lessons were learnt from the process of implementing the FMI and the links between PD and the change process.

It is important to pay critical attention to the changing 'political winds' and to address the perceived needs and issues that arise out of this analysis. This entails being able to sift through the available information and rhetoric and draw out critical points which need to be taken up and translated into new and revised practices.

PD provided to staff needs to be practical, purposeful (i.e. not viewed as a waste of time) and must enable the lecturers to feel that they do have some control over the change process. In the words of the manager:

> [It was important for the lecturers to see that] ... your jobs haven't disappeared its changed and here's the skills for you to change and to feel comfortable about doing something differently. Doing the same thing—being a management lecturer—but doing it differently ...

Change grows out of a recognition of the strengths of a group, the building up of recognised weaknesses and the ability to act upon opportunities as they arise. It is an on-going process which, in many respects, becomes a seamless one. Yesterday's PD is used in implementing today's new initiative and today's PD strategy is built upon the critical analysis of emerging trends and issues.

Interviewer: Michele Simons

Change to open-learning and flexible delivery to service a large regional area through CY O'Connor Regional College of TAFE

Introduction

The CY O'Connor Regional College of TAFE is situated in Northam, 97 kilometres east of Perth, Western Australia. This wheat-belt area was originally served by five TAFE centres that provided mainly adult community education. In 1994, these centres were amalgamated and CY O'Connor was established as an autonomous regional college to provide vocational education to the region, an area approximately the size of Victoria.

The changes being investigated

To meet the needs of this widely scattered population, delivery methods had to be developed to provide a quality product to a wide range of consumers. The method

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chosen was one of open-learning and flexible delivery. The college refers to this method as multi-mode and mixed-mode learning (MML).

The establishment of a college organisation from five disparate TAFE centres and the change from a traditional delivery method to an open-learning flexible delivery method is the basis of this case study.

The basis for the unification of these centres was the development of a matrix organisational structure with a non-traditional culture that was capable of undertaking the continuous improvement of administrative processes and delivery methodologies.

The primary business objective of the college is to deliver vocational education and training in agriculture, agribusiness, human services, and business and IT in the most appropriate manner to all customers, including the most distant ones.

During 1995, the Northern TAFE centre had been delivering some vocational training through a separate flexible delivery unit. This unit operated independently, handling the educational as well as the administrative requirements of the distance learners.

In order to meet the business objectives of the new regional college, it was necessary to integrate the operations of the existing flexible delivery unit across all learning areas and centres. This meant that administrative requirements and learning delivery methods had to provide all learners, regardless of location, with quality services and products. New ways of doing things had to be found.

Planning for the change

Because a special unit had already been providing some courses via flexible delivery, new ground had already been broken. The challenge was for all staff to adopt, modify and utilise further innovative approaches to deliver training to distant clients. To achieve this, the managing director initiated a management concept based on delivery teams which fitted into a matrix structure. This placed great emphasis on the development of teams and on developing links between teams. It was hoped that, with such a cross-section of expertise, solutions to the problem of how to service such a wide geographic area would emerge.

It soon became apparent to the managing director that, in order for teams to work effectively, all members would need to have good interpersonal and communication skills. To this end, a strategy to develop these skills was put in place.

To support the changes in delivery and the consequent changes in work procedures, the college adopted a number of strategies. These include working towards QETO status (quality endorsed training organisation) for developing a quality product, Investing in People (IiP) for developing the people and ISO 9001 for developing the quality

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processes. (At the moment, CY O'Connor is the only training-provider organisation in the State that is currently working towards public recognition as an IiP under the internationally recognised IiP standard.)

Planning for the PD element to support the change

Because of the dispersed nature of the operations of the college, staff at all centres had previously operated in a relatively autonomous and isolated fashion. Working in teams was a new approach for most of them and some development in this area was required.

Initially, all staff members were able to nominate themselves for any of various PD courses run for people working in the vocational education and training (VET) sector. This comparatively *ad hoc* process was seen to have been good for staff morale because there was no history of staff development for the previous TAFE centres. A more systematic approach based on a skills analysis and in the context of the college's strategic goals was planned for late 1995.

At the same time, the managing director initiated specific team development programs. These were to ensure the development of those interpersonal skills previously identified as being crucial for team work. Staff took part in such PD courses as negotiating skills, conflict resolution, team-building, communication skills and, stress management.

The college's current strategic and operational plans document the training and development needs of the college and these are directly linked to the performance management system (PMS). At the 6-monthly performance management interviews, individual development needs are discussed in relation to these strategic and operational plans.

What actually happened in implementing the change

Initially, the resistance to change was greater than anticipated. Many staff were not really interested in the 'big picture' and were concerned about how the changes were impacting on learners. The emphasis on developing systems and procedures and achieving QETO and ISO 9001 was initially perceived as being confusing and irrelevant.

New procedures were being developed and gradually refined through trial and error. Even though teams were supported with activities on team-building, this was a frustrating time for them. Some of those involved expressed their frustration with this work on team-building and said that all they wanted was 'help to get on with the job!'

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As a direct result of the extensive PD, there are now a number of working teams made up of people from across the college. These teams have a wide range of expertise and work effectively. They continue to work on procedures and processes so that CY O'Connor's MML courses can be accessed by learners from a wide area.

It is interesting that many of those who are now working in teams do not see the link between the teams and PD. They tend to think of PD as related to courses and their delivery.

For some of these people, early development experiences on team-building were slow and frustrating. By the end of the process, however, the effectiveness of the strategy was evident. All the staff interviewed for this case study spoke of the teams they are working in, how they depend on others in their team, their roles and relationships in those teams and so on.

The outcomes of change

In the 3 years since this change began, the public's perception of CY O'Connor has altered. It is now seen as a quality organisation which is capable of providing training to anywhere in its catchment area. The college's enrolments have increased significantly and the range of courses offered has expanded.

The college met the QETO standards in September 1996 and should achieve ISO 9001 status by August 1997 and IiP by September 1997.

Staff interviewed commented on how satisfied they feel with their position in the organisation and how they enjoy working as part of a team. They acknowledged that the past 3 years were difficult but feel satisfied with the outcomes. They feel their contributions to the teams are valued. All staff interviewed for this case study remarked on the benefits of the team approach.

Important factors in the process of change

A number of factors contributed to the successful implementation of the changes at CY O'Connor.

- The managing director had a well-prepared initial plan and followed it through.
- The need to develop teams was recognised and the resources were committed to developing interpersonal skills for this.

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- There was an atmosphere of change in the college, partly as a result of the organisational restructure and staff recognition of the experimental nature of the college's development.

- The increasing availability of open learning from institutions across Australia provided a competitive edge to the process—there was a suggestion that if CY O'Connor didn't deliver the courses another college would.

Summary

At CY O'Connor, the managing director was faced with the task of delivering courses to learners at distant locations. All the people who were to deliver these courses had content expertise but only a few had flexible delivery expertise. To develop this across the college, the managing director decided to develop a number of teams who would tackle problems and generate solutions.

PD was targeted mainly at developing the skills that would enable people to function effectively in a team (for example, conflict resolution, communication, negotiation). The plans and strategies were all developed in the context of QETO, IiP and ISO 9001.

The commitment of the interviewees to the new procedures appears to be genuine and very strong. It suggests that the commitment of the managing director has been both infectious and effective.

Interviewers: Christine Bateman and Gillian Lowe

Change in language program delivery from needs-based to competency-based, at Adult Migrant Education Service, Western Australia

Introduction

The Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) is located in Perth, Western Australia, with two centres in central Perth, one in the port of Fremantle and one in the suburb of Balga.

The service has a long-standing commitment to the provision of PD for its staff. A PD unit of three is employed specifically to support this purpose and four 1/2-days are scheduled each term so that staff can participate in PD activities.

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The service delivers English language training to adult migrants. Under the current system, students aspire to complete the Certificates in Spoken and Written English (CSWE).

The changes being investigated

As a result of the national training reform agenda, the existing delivery methods and assessment procedures of AMES had to be formalised. This was the genesis of the CSWE, a competency-based framework which provided statements of required performance. This framework also acted as a guide to course placement (that is, the starting point for the language students), program design relating to the competencies required at each level, as well as a framework for formal assessment and recognition of competency. Previously, assessment had only been done using a language proficiency rating scale.

For most AMES staff, this represented a very significant change in their approach to teaching.

Planning for change

Management support for this certificate was total because competitive tendering was about to be introduced and, to be eligible for government funding, the service provider had to offer courses which were accredited.

To support them in developing new strategies and keeping abreast of developments, teachers at AMES already had eight PD days each year. Management planned to use this framework to support the introduction and development of the CSWE and its strategy was to use the PD unit to develop staff.

The Campbell report (1985) into language teaching recommended (among other things) a variety of PD activities for AMES staff. This led to the service making a very strong commitment to PD. Three PD officers were appointed and procedures were put in place to enable staff to access PD on a regular basis.

Planning for the PD element to support the change

The existence of a well-functioning PD unit made management's planning significantly easier. It was decided that the unit would coordinate all the PD activities and concentrate on preparing staff to deliver the CSWE.

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The manager and the coordinator of the PD unit travelled to New South Wales to attend formal training in implementing the certificates. On their return, they adopted the following strategy.

Stage 1: The PD unit familiarised itself with both the broad view and the detailed picture of the changes that were to be implemented. Members of the PD unit attended a 3-day training session on competency-based training (CBT).

Stage 2: The unit members used their 3-day training as a basis for training their colleagues. Staff needed to know why the certificate was being introduced, why methodological changes were required, and how CBT worked.

Stage 3: A small group of teachers were invited to pilot the new procedures. This group used AL strategies to develop means for delivering the certificate. During this period (one term), colleagues were able to observe CBT in Action and feel involved in the development process. In the next term, a larger group of teachers adopted CBT as a method, further refining some of the details in the process. Finally, in the third term, all teachers in the service adopted CBT as the basis for their teaching.

What actually happened in the implementation of the change

One of the major surprises of this process of change was how the change in delivery impacted the individuals. Many staff initially could not come to grips with the need to change their tried-and-tested methods of teaching. They were concerned that this change would destroy the very effective methods of teaching being used at AMES and that the students would be disadvantaged. Many of those most affected had little understanding of CBT and were unable to accept the requirements and implications of the National Framework for the Recognition of Training.

The implementation of the certificates and the change to CBT met with great initial resistance—it was a very big change and the highly qualified and very experienced teachers did not agree with many of the features or philosophy of CBT.

What actually happened in the implementation of the PD element

Major concerns and anxieties emerged in individuals and these had to be addressed before most staff could focus on the actual changes to be implemented. Major mind shifts had to occur before progress towards developing strategies and approaches to delivering the CSWE could occur. This was a very stressful phase for all involved.

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The PD unit also realised that people respond to change at different rates. Using this knowledge, they targeted those ready to accept the change and used them to pilot the program. An AL approach was used for this. (Two AL groups were written up as case studies in the CBT in Action scheme in 1994.)

Leaders emerged who helped the PD team implement changes. Working through the process helped people identify within themselves and their colleagues enormous talent and potential. A teacher was co-opted to refine assessment tasks developed by her colleagues. This position was a vital element in the successful implementation of the CSWE.

The outcomes of the change

In spite of resistance and reluctance to using CBT in language teaching, change did take place. All teachers at AMES, even those who continued (and continue) to have reservations about the program, were working with the certificate by the end of the second year. This demonstrates an effectiveness in keeping to a timeframe and in ensuring full participation.

Some staff members continue to have reservations about the program but there have been no resignations due to the changes that were implemented.

The participants interviewed believed at the end of the process that the PD they had received was sufficient to implement the change.

Important factors in the process of change

The successful implementation of CSWE at AMES has many factors contributing to it. Some of these are:

- all staff were informed of the underlying reasons for the change;
- likely difficulties with the change were not glossed over or denied;
- there was a demonstrated and dedicated commitment to work together on the part of the PD unit, management and teachers;
- time and emotional support were given to staff to help them adjust to the changes;
- those with a wider perspective and readiness to try something different were identified and given a leading role;
- strong informal networks already existed—there was a culture of sharing and communicating;
- there was a free flow of information from the developers of the certificate;

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- management and staff realised that they had no option but to change if they were to survive as an organisation competing in the training market;
- there was a group of PD people who were able to support each other when there were difficulties (this is in contrast to departments where there is only one PD person, often working in isolation, or where there is none at all); and
- the staff were accustomed to continuous PD as a part of their job and were probably more able to cope with change than a group who had not been previously exposed to continuous development.

Summary

The changes that AMES teachers were required to implement were very significant. The staff had been used to a range of changes in language teaching methods but this change was much more fundamental. What is more, it was part of a system-wide change, not something which had evolved from the language teaching area.

The change has been handled very well. All AMES staff are now involved in the CSWE and are successfully implementing CBT. Many of the staff still have some strong reservations about the appropriateness of the method but they have put these aside and have adopted all the changes.

The PD unit at AMES consists of a small group of people and the service has a long-established commitment to PD. The staff, as a result of the Campbell report, have high professional qualifications. There is a regular time allocation for PD and the staff both expect and value it.

All responses from interviewees gave credit to the commitment and professionalism of a group of people (PD staff, teachers and managers) who were determined, for the sake of the students and the survival of the organisation, to make the changes work. Concern for the students is a major factor in AMES activities and there is now a recognition that the new procedures will provide students with an accredited certificate and articulation into different levels.

The success of the AMES experience seems unquestioned. Also unquestioned seems to be recognition of the role played by a committed management, an experienced PD unit and a professional and dedicated staff.

Interviewers: Christine Bateman and Gillian Lowe

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Australian National Training Authority
GPO Box 3120
Brisbane, Qld 4001
Telephone: (07) 3246 2300
Facsimile: (07) 3246 2490
ANTA Web site: www.anta.gov.au

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